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ALBRECHT DÜRER

PART I.—THE ENGRAVINGS

PART II.—THE PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

ALBRECHT DÜRER

A STUDY OF HIS LIFE AND WORK

By

LIONEL CUST

Director of the National Portrait Gallery

Late of the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS

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THE ENGRAVINGS
OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

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List of books to which the writer has been more or less extensively indebted :—

1. "Das Leben und die Werke Albrecht Dürers," von Joseph Heller (Bamberg, 1827).
2. "Albrecht Dürers Kupferstiche, Radirungen, Holzschnitte, und Zeichnungen," vom Oberbaurath B. Hausmann (Hannover, 1861).
3. "Dürers Kupferstiche und Holzschnitte. Ein kritisches Verzeichniss," von R. v. Retberg (München, 1871).
4. "Albert Dürer : his Teachers, his Rivals, and his Followers," by Sidney Colvin, in the *Portfolio*, vol. viii. (1877).
5. "Albert Dürer, his Life and Works," by Moriz Thausing. Translated from the German and edited by Fred. A. Eaton, 2 vols. (John Murray, 1882).
6. "Albert Dürer et ses Dessins," par Charles Ephrussi (Paris, 1882).
7. "The Literary Remains of Albrecht Dürer," by W. M. Conway and Lina Eckenstein (Camb. Univ. Press, 1889).
8. "Albrecht Dürer," von Anton Springer (Berlin, 1892).
9. "Albrecht Dürers Aufenthalt in Basel, 1492–1494," von Dr. Daniel Burckhardt (München, 1892).
10. "Albrecht Dürers Venetianischer Aufenthalt, 1494–1495," von Dr. Gabriel von Terey (Strassburg, 1892).
11. "Catalogue of the Engraved Work of Albrecht Dürer," the prints arranged in the order of their execution, by C. H. Middleton (Cambridge, 1893).
12. "Dürers Schriftlicher Nachlass, etc." herausgegeben von Dr. K. Lange und Dr. F. Fuhse (Halle, 1893).

THE ENGRAVINGS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

CHAPTER I

History of engraving on wood and copper before Dürer—Martin Schongauer—Dürer's birth and parentage—Anthoni Koberger and printing in Nuremberg—Early drawings—Apprenticeship to Wolgemut—"Wanderjahre"—First visit to Venice—Jecopo dei Barbari—Return to Nuremberg.

To one writing of the life and work of an artist such as Albrecht Dürer, the weighty words of John Ruskin, in his Introduction to the gospel of modern art, *Modern Painters*, recur with particular emphasis. "If it be true," says Ruskin—"and it can scarcely be disputed—that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honour and award what is undue have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds

and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this, the gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature." So writes the art-prophet of the nineteenth century, and his words, leading up as they do to the study and appreciation of the immortal works of Turner, apply as well to the equally immortal creations of Albrecht Dürer.

Albrecht Dürer fills a large space in the history of art. So far as Germany is concerned he is *facile princeps*, unrivalled even in his own age by so great an artist as the younger Hans Holbein, and towering above all his successors, no one of whom can raise a head high enough to look him in the face, with the exception perhaps of Adolf Menzel at the present day. Wherever there are or will be students and lovers of art, there must be a great majority in whom instinct and intellect will be stimulated by the study of the works of Dürer, whether as painter, engraver, philosopher, author, or merely as simple burgher citizen of Nuremberg. That city—*mein liebes Nürenberg*, as Hans Sachs sings in *Die Meistersinger*—is justly proud of the artist to whom it owes so much of its fame, and cherishes among its most treasured relics that low-ceilinged gabled house near the Thiergärtner Thor in which Dürer lived, worked, and died. Although it would seem that it was Dürer's ambition to excel as a painter, it is as an engraver that he has won his fame and taken so sympathetic a grasp of the human heart. It is as an engraver also both on wood and on metal that he has earned that high place in the hierarchy of art which generations of students have allotted to him. It is all the more astonishing to think that copperplate-engraving was hardly older than the century in which Dürer was born, and that wood-engraving, if of greater antiquity, owes its place among the pictorial arts almost entirely to Dürer himself.

It will probably always remain an impossible task to fix an exact date for the invention of engraving on copper or wood, even when limited to the function of giving off an impression with ink or some similar pigment. Two factors must, however, be always taken into consideration—namely, the ink and paper necessary for the making of prints. It was not until the fifteenth century that paper began to be manufactured from linen rags, good, strong, and above all cheap enough to be of use to the printer and the engraver. Parchment, beloved of the scribe, was at all times

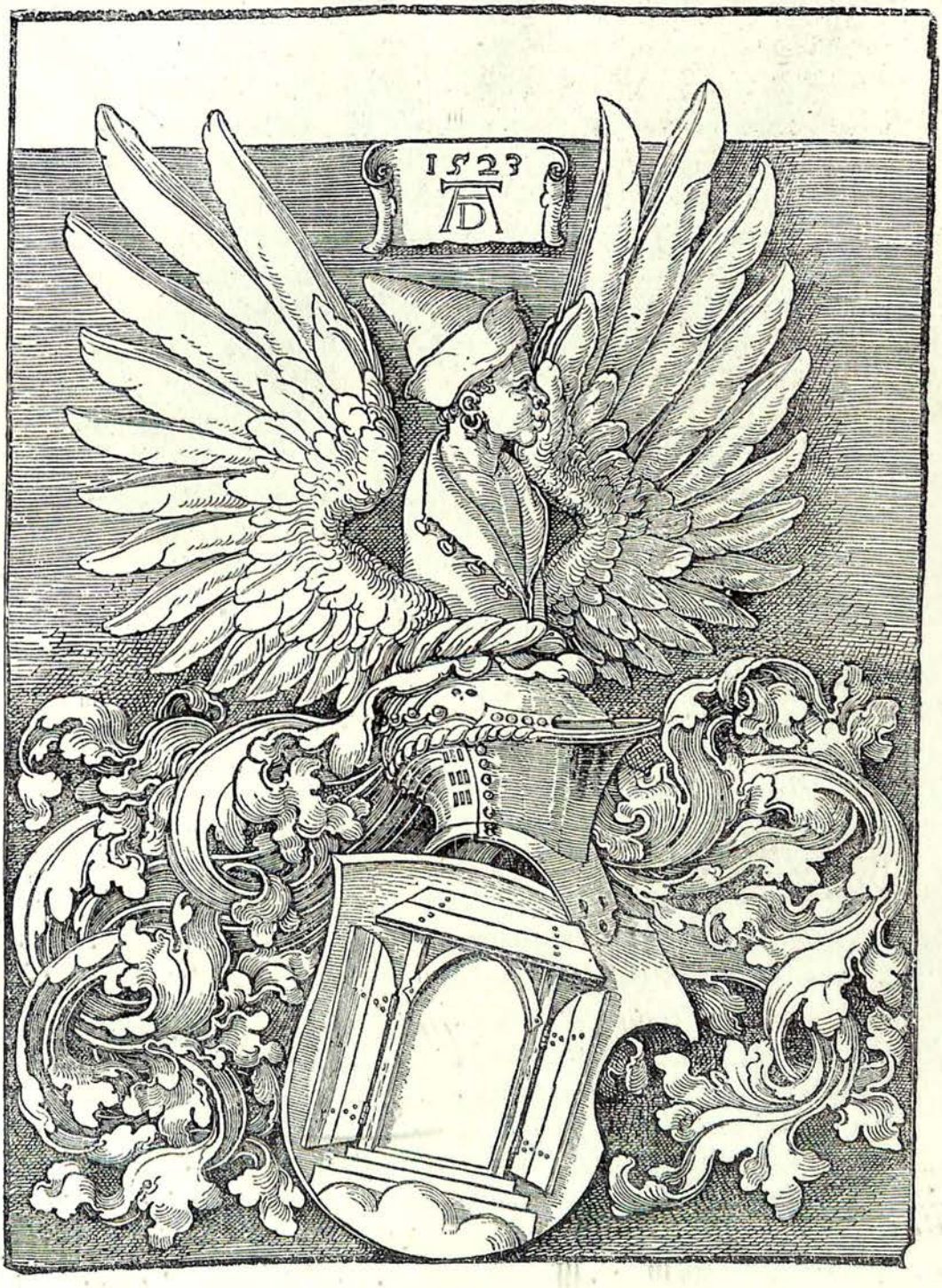
an expensive luxury, well adapted for highly finished work, but most unsuitable for rapid and marketable writing or printing. The invention of such paper led to the development of all branches of engraving, and in its turn to that invention which has proved perhaps the most important and fruitful for the whole human race—printing from movable types. Moreover, it was not until the middle of the fifteenth century that an ink was manufactured of a consistency suitable for really satisfactory printing—an ink which it must be remarked, by the way, has never been excelled even at the present day. Given the absence of these two necessary ingredients, the tardiness of the human race in the invention of engraving, or rather of printing in all its branches, can be explained and excused.

The history of wood-engraving is well known : its early use for small rude outline prints of saints or playing-cards, intended solely as a framework for colour, roughly but not always inartistically applied ; then the picture- or block-books, from which sprang the invention of printing with movable types ; and, finally, its adoption for the purpose of decorating or illustrating books. The history of copperplate-engraving is more obscure. The researches of Dr. Max Lehrs, the director of the Royal Cabinet of Prints at Dresden, have proved that it was practised in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and with some skill. It was really developed out of the goldsmith's art, all the earliest copperplate-engravers being probably professional workers in metal. The earliest practitioner of the art was an engraver known as the "Master of the Playing-cards," from a series of interesting cards engraved on copper by him in the early part of the fifteenth century. These cards were popular at the time, because they were copied by the illuminators of manuscripts, which can be dated not later than 1435. Other engravers, whose names are unknown, followed, but the first engraver to invest the art of copperplate-engraving with interest and importance was a native of the Upper Rhine country, whose initials only, E. S., are known, and who worked from about 1450, or perhaps earlier, till 1467. He was probably a goldsmith by profession, but his engravings, which show his gradual progress in the art, are frequently picturesque and decorative, combining great technical skill with much beauty of design and intensity of conception. His immediate successors of importance and originality were the

artist known as "The Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet," from the fact that the bulk of his engravings, executed with the needle or dry point, are preserved at Amsterdam, but who was a native of Swabia or South Germany, and has been identified conjecturally by no less an authority than Dr. Lippmann of Berlin as Hans Holbein the elder; an engraver known by his initials P. W., apparently a native of Cologne; and Martin Schongauer.

Schongauer was a native of Colmar in Alsace, where he was born about the middle of the fifteenth century. Living as he did in the vicinity of the Upper Rhine, and not far from the district in which the master E. S. worked, he must have been acquainted with that artist's engravings. He was both painter and engraver, mingling with the hard dry goldsmith's handling of the copper a tenderness of touch and a depth of feeling which have made his engravings not only highly valued both by his contemporaries and by posterity, but also models which formed and influenced the whole of German art, and established a national character in it, as opposed to the dominating influence of the Flemish school of Rogier van der Weyden and the stern uncompromising art of Cologne. His engravings were circulated far and wide, penetrating even beyond the Alps. Michelangelo was not too great to copy a print by Schongauer, nor Raphael to adopt from one of Schongauer's engravings the principal motive of one of his most famous pictures. *Hübsch Martin*, or Martin the Beautiful, he was dubbed by his friends.

Albrecht Dürer's family did not belong to Nuremberg, nor was he sprung from any patrician or burgher race in its neighbourhood. Fortunately he has left a record of his early life and parentage, compiled in 1524 from some notes left by his father. From these he tells that his grandfather Anthoni Dürer was of a farmer race in a hamlet called Eytas, close to a small town called Gyula, eight miles south of Grosswardein in Hungary, into which town he came as a boy and was apprenticed to a goldsmith. The grandfather married a girl called Elisabeth, by whom he had one daughter and three sons, the eldest of whom was Albrecht, Dürer's father; of the other two the second was called Ladislas, became a saddler, and was the father of Dürer's cousin, Niklas Unger (the Hungarian), who, after working with Dürer's father at Nuremberg, settled as a goldsmith at Cologne; the third son became a scholar, and



Armorial Bearings of the Dürer Family. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.

parish priest at Grosswardein. Albrecht Dürer the elder, after wandering through Germany and in the Netherlands, came to Nuremberg in 1455, being about twenty-eight years of age, on St. Eulogius's Day (March 11), "and on that same day Philipp Pirkheimer was celebrating his wedding on the Veste, and a great dance was held under the big lime-tree"; so early did the names of Dürer and Pirkheimer come together. It has been suggested, with some ground, that the name of Dürer (or Thürer, as it was pronounced at Nuremberg) is merely a rendering of the Hungarian word *Ajtó* (Eytas), meaning a door. Albrecht the elder was taken as an apprentice by Hieronymus Holper, who in 1467 gave him his daughter Barbara to wife, the marriage taking place eight days before St. Veit's Day (June 8). Holper had married Kunigunde Oellinger von Weissenburg, which shows him to have been a man of some position. Albrecht and Barbara Dürer had eighteen children, of whom only three lived to grow up—Albrecht, the third child and second son, born in 1471; Andreas, born in 1484; and Hans, born in 1490.

Albrecht Dürer the elder became one of the leading goldsmiths in Nuremberg. His marriage obtained him an entry into the rights of a burgher, and he became Master of the Goldsmiths' Company, and held other public offices of repute. Dürer has left two painted portraits of him —one, dated 1491, at Florence, and another, dated 1497, at Sion House. On the reverse of the former are painted the arms of the Dürer family, being two shields, one bearing gules, an open door azure (for Dürer or Thürer), the other azure, a ram argent for Holper, and surmounted by a Moor's bust with cap and jacket gules, faced with or. Dürer has left a fine woodcut of his own arms, the canting coat being evidently adopted according to the practice prevalent among the leading families of Nuremberg. He also left a written description of his father, in which he says that his father "spent his life in great industry and hard severe work, his only object being to earn with his own hand a living for himself and family; that he was very poor, met with many troubles and reverses, but was esteemed by all who knew him, since he led an honourable Christian life, was patient, gentle and peaceful in his dealings with everybody, and always thankful to God; that he kept but little company, and sought few pleasures for himself, was a man of few words, and feared God; that he paid a great deal

of attention to his children's education, his daily words to them being 'that we should love God and deal truly with our neighbours.'" His mother's character is more shadowy: she seems to have been pious and benevolent, and deeply attached to her children, especially to her youngest son Hans, the Benjamin of the family. The two younger sons both became artists: Andreas, a goldsmith at Nuremberg; and Hans, after working at Nuremberg, and in the service of the Emperor Maximilian, eventually became a painter at Cracow in Poland, not far from the country of his ancestors. Dürer was born on May 21, 1471, in his father's house in the Burgstrasse, a street in the St. Sebald quarter of Nuremberg, leading up to the castle or Veste. In the immediate vicinity were the houses of Bernhard Walther the astronomer, Michel Wolgemut the painter, Hartmann Schedel the man of letters, and Anthoni Koberger the famous printer and publisher, who stood godfather to the young Albrecht. Dürer says that his father took a special delight in him, as he saw that he was anxious to learn, so that he allowed him to go to school and learn to read and write before he apprenticed him to his own trade as a goldsmith. Dürer, however, found that his inclinations were much more towards painting than goldsmithry, and told his father so. His father was disappointed at having wasted so much time on teaching the boy his craft, but gave in to him, and apprenticed him for three years, on St. Andrew's Day in 1486, to the painter Michel Wolgemut, during which time, Dürer says, "God lent me industry, so that I learnt well; but I had to put up with a great deal of annoyance from my fellow-pupils."

The date of Dürer's birth synchronises with the commencement of a great artistic and industrial movement in Nuremberg.

> Wie friedsam treuer Sitten
> Getrost in That und Werk
> Liegt nicht in Deutschlands Mitten
> Mein liebes Nürenberg.—*Die Meistersinger*

Painting, though practised in Nuremberg for some years previously, did not attain any importance there until the days of the Pleydenwurffs and Wolgemut. Wolgemut married the widow of Hans Pleydenwurff, and with his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwurff was the chief purveyor of

paintings to the citizens of Nuremberg. Their paintings are of no mean merit, which is now beginning to be recognised.

More important, however, to Nuremberg was the great development in the art of printing. Gutenberg's invention was brought from Mayence to Nuremberg about 1470 by Johann Sensenschmidt. Johannes Regiomontanus printed there in 1472 his *Kalendarium Novum.* The great man, though, in the trade was Anthoni Koberger, the first great bookseller in the world, who, besides the numerous printing-presses which he kept at work in Nuremberg, was the chief disseminator of books throughout Europe, with correspondents in every town of importance—Augsburg, Munich, Prague, Vienna, Pesth, Cracow, Lübeck, Paris, Lyons, Basle, Milan, Bologna, Florence, and Venice—a veritable "prince of booksellers," as one of his contemporaries addresses him. Koberger, though not the actual printer of the first illustrated Bible, which was published by Heinrich Quentel at Cologne in 1480, purchased the blocks, brought them to Nuremberg, and published them in a Bible of his own in 1483. These cuts are evidently designed by a good artist, and probably instigated Koberger to a new venture of book-illustration, when he planned out the *Schatzbehalter* and the *Weltchronik*, with Hartmann Schedel as editor of the latter, and intrusted the drawing of the illustrations to the best artists at hand—the painters Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff. As these books were not published until 1490 and 1492 respectively, after the expiration of Dürer's apprenticeship, he could scarcely have had much share in their production. Supposing that they occupied some years before completion, it is not impossible that he may have had, as an apprentice, some subordinate part in the work. Unfortunately for these books, the merit of the designs was ruined by the inefficiency of the wood-cutters in Koberger's employment, as may be seen by comparing the drawing of *The Creator* in the Print Room at the British Museum with the printed frontispiece of the *Chronicle.* The only painting of importance known to have been produced in Wolgemut's studio during Dürer's apprenticeship is the so-called Peringsdörffer altarpiece, now in the German Museum at Nuremberg, a work of great merit and interest, which must have been executed before the young Dürer's eyes.

There are but few traces of Dürer's work as a boy artist. The most

Albrecht Dürer at the age of thirteen. From a drawing by himself in the Albertina collection at Vienna.

interesting is the portrait of himself (in the Albertina collection at Vienna) at the age of thirteen, drawn in silver point from a reflection in a looking-glass, an amazing production for a boy of that age. A somewhat older portrait of himself has just been discovered at Erlangen, a head resting on his hand, drawn with the pen, evidently also from a looking-glass, with a large composition of the Holy Family drawn with the pen on the other side of the same sheet of paper. This drawing

Portrait of Albrecht Dürer when a boy. From a drawing by himself in the University Library at Erlangen.

shows a great advance in the art ; though a mere sketch, the drawing of the hand is masterly, and it must be ascribed to a time when the young Dürer had acquired some training, probably during his apprenticeship to Wolgemut. Another drawing (in Berlin), signed and dated 1485, represents the Virgin and Child enthroned, with an angel playing music on either side, and a somewhat similar drawing is in the Louvre at Paris. A fourth drawing in pencil (in the British Museum) of a woman with a

hawk on her wrist is inscribed by another hand: "This also is old. Albrecht Dürer did it for me before he came to the painter, in Wolgemut's house on the upper story in the hinderhouse, in the presence of Conrad Lomayr, deceased." A few other pen-drawings have also been preserved—one of three soldiers (at Berlin), a riding-party (at Bremen), and a courier (in the British Museum). These are all what may be termed engraver's drawings, drawn in outline and shaded with cross-hatchings, as if they had been done by Martin Schongauer. Dürer's father seems not only to have been acquainted with Schongauer's engravings, but to have been in correspondence with Schongauer himself, and the style of these early drawings of Dürer, and many of the designs of Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff, show that Schongauer's engravings must have been regular subjects of study among the pupils in that studio. These drawings show that even at this date Dürer studied the works of other artists, but never merely copied, always working up his notes into original compositions of his own.

Dürer's apprenticeship to Wolgemut terminated towards the close of the year 1489. "When I had completed my service," he says, "my father sent me away, and I remained absent four years, until my father summoned me back." He left Nuremberg after Easter in 1490, and returned after Whitsuntide in 1494. It was the custom in Germany for all young men who intended entering on a trade after the completion of their apprenticeship (*Lehrjahre*) to go away from home for a similar period (*Wanderjahre*) and acquire what knowledge they could of the trade on which they were going to embark, in places and from persons away from their own immediate surroundings. It has been a matter of some dispute as to how Dürer spent his years of wandering. Fortunately, a friend and contemporary of Dürer, Christoph Scheurl, a leading man of letters and humanist in Nuremberg, has left an explicit statement of how part of Dürer's time was occupied. Noticing a statement made by the historian Wimpfeling in 1503, to the effect that Dürer had learnt engraving from Martin Schongauer, Scheurl questioned Dürer himself about the matter. Dürer informed Scheurl that when he was thirteen years old his father had intended to send him eventually to study under Schongauer at Colmar, and had even written to Schongauer on the subject, but that Schongauer died just about the time when Dürer had completed

his three years' apprenticeship to Wolgemut. However, Dürer, in 1492, after travelling through Germany, went all the same to Colmar, and was hospitably received by Schongauer's brothers, the goldsmiths Caspar and Paul, and the painter Ludwig, as he was also at Basle by another brother, the goldsmith Georg Schongauer. Martin Schongauer, however, Dürer never even saw, so that he could never have been his pupil. From this it is evident that Dürer's father, being well acquainted with Schongauer as an engraver, intended his son, after completing his drawing studies with Wolgemut, to go and study in Schongauer's school at Colmar. It is now known that Schongauer died at Breisach on the Rhine early in 1491, but that his school of engraving was carried on by his brother Ludwig. Dürer therefore, although he could not have the advantage of instruction from the great Martin himself, did the next best thing, by coming all the same to study in the Schongauer school at Colmar. It is uncertain what places he had previously visited in Germany, but it is highly probable that his travels were directed by his godfather Koberger, who was in communication with every important town in Germany, and in constant employment of young men like Dürer as travellers in the

[1] This passage is seldom quoted at length. It occurs in Scheurl's letter, "De Vita et Obitu Reverendi Patris Antonii Kressen, &c.," printed in Goldast's edition of the *Life and Works of Willibald Pirkheimer*. It runs as follows: "Et in magno precio habuit Albertum Durer Nuremberga, quem ego Germanum Appellem per excellentiam appellare soleo. Testes mihi sunt, ut reliquos taceo, Bononienses pictores, qui illi in faciem me audiente publice principatum picturæ in universo orbe detulerunt, affirmantes jucundius se morituros viso tamdiu desiderato Alberto. Testis liber quem de ratione pingendi post Appellem nostro ævo solus perscripsit, de quo pictores judicant et potentes. Mihi in meo suavissimo Durer non minus grata sunt ingenuina probitas, facundia, comitas, facilitas, humanitas. Itaque unum præterire nequeo. Jacobus Vimphelingius nunquam a me sine honoris præfatione nominandus capite 68 Epitomatis Germanorum tradit Albertum nostrum usum esse præceptore Martino Schön Columbariensi, ceterum Albertum ad me, hoc significantem, scribit, sæpe etiam coram testatur, patrem Albertum, is ex vico Cula prope Veradium civitatem Hungariæ natus erat, destinasse quidem se adolescentulum, tertium decimum annum natum, Martino Schön ob celebrem famam in disciplinam traditurum fuisse, et ad eum eius rei gratia dedisse etiam litteras, qui tamen sub id tempus excesserit undi ipse in Gymnasio utriusque nostrum vicini et municipis Michaelis Wolgemuts triennio profecerit: tandem peragrata Germania, quum anno nonagesimo secundo Colmariam venisset a Caspare et Paulo aurifabris et Ludovico pictore, item etiam Basileæ a Georgio aurifabro, Martini fratribus, susceptus sit, benigne atque humane tractatus. Ceterum Martini discipulum minime fuisse, immo ne vidisse quidem, attamen videre desiderasse vehementer."

bookselling trade. It is certain that at some time Dürer visited Strasburg [1] and Basle, where two of Koberger's chief correspondents were in business —Grüninger at Strasburg and Amerbach at Basle. Moreover, these two printers were the chief continuers of Koberger's enterprise in books illustrated by the best artists, of whom there was at the time no large choice. Dürer therefore could have got plenty of employment both in designing and cutting wood-blocks from either of these firms. That he did so at Basle is clear from a wood-block of St. Jerome, preserved in the museum there, which bears his name on the back, and was used for an edition of *St. Jerome's Letters*, published by Kessler, another of Koberger's correspondents at Basle in 1492. A series of partially completed wood-blocks for use as illustrations to an edition of *Terence* are also preserved in the museum at Basle, and a large part of these have been credited to Dürer.[2] The conventional treatment of the figures and costume then in vogue makes it almost impossible to separate with certainty the works of various draughtsmen on wood at the time. The same features occur not only in the illustrations published at Basle and Strasburg, but also in some of the later illustrations to the Nuremberg *Weltchronik* and in the drawings and engravings of the so-called "Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet" mentioned above. That so intelligent a writer as Sebastian Brant, who supervised the printing and illustration of his own works, should have perceived the value of Dürer's draughtsmanship is very probable indeed.

Although evidence has been strongly, almost passionately, brought to show the contrary, it seems to be clearly proved that the latter portion of Dürer's *Wanderjahre* was spent in Venice. Venice was one of the chief centres of the printing world, in fact of the whole world's commerce. German merchants from Venice, Augsburg, and the Hanse Towns mustered there in such force that a special building was reserved for their accommodation, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, adjoining the Rialto, where they were enjoined by the Venetian Government to reside. Many merchants resided there as general

[1] It has been ascertained that Georg Schongauer, the goldsmith, and his wife Apollonia left Basle and settled at Strasburg, where according to an old tradition Dürer worked under him, and painted their portraits.

[2] See D. Burckhardt, *Dürers Aufenthalt in Basel.*

agents, among whom was Anthoni Kolb, a native of Nuremberg, and one of Koberger's chief friends and correspondents. Dürer, as Koberger's godson, would naturally have a strong recommendation to Kolb, and a warm welcome from the merchants of Nuremberg. Painting in Venice had just commenced that era of progress and increasing glory which was inaugurated by the introduction of the secret of oil-colours by Antonello da Messina, was continued and brought to a higher pitch of excellence by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and reached its culmination in the works of Giorgione and Titian. At the time of Dürer's first visit the Bellinis were the chief power in Venetian painting, though their rule was shared by that great pioneer in art, their brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna, at Padua. It is known that Dürer had intercourse with Giovanni Bellini, but the painter with whom he was brought into most close association was one Jacopo dei Barbari, or de Barbaris, known familiarly to his fellow-countrymen as Jacometto, and to his German friends as Jakob Walch, that being the word always used by Dürer in his letters to signify an Italian. Barbari was about twenty years older than Dürer, and apparently already an acquaintance of Kolb. He had a considerable reputation as a painter of portraits and illuminations, and was noted for the minuteness and delicacy of his painting, though his colouring, at least in his later works executed in Germany, was very cold and thin. He was however certainly one of the leading painters in Venice before the suns of Giorgione and Titian had risen, and a writer in 1529, the "Anonimo" of the Abbate Morelli, does not hesitate to assign to him the exquisite little painting of *St. Jerome in his Study*, recently acquired by the National Gallery, but now accredited with every possible authority to the great Antonello da Messina himself, whose pupil Barbari[1]

[1] Although there is no reason for doubting the ascription of this interesting painting to Antonello da Messina, it is interesting to quote the "Anonimo's" own words, since he wrote as far back as 1529. The picture was then in the house of Antonio Pasqualino at Venice. "El quadretto del S. Jeronimo che nel studio legge, in abito cardinalesco, alcuni credono che el sii stato di mano di Antonello da Messina; ma li più, e più verisimilmente, l'attribuiscono a Gianes, ovvero al Memelin, pittor antico ponentino; e cussì mostra quella maniera, benchè el volto è finito alla italiana; sicchè pare de mano de Jacometto. Li edifici sono alla ponentina, el paesetto è naturale, minuto e finito, e si vede oltra una finestra, e oltra la porta del studio e pur fugge: e tutta l'opera, per sottilita, colori, disegno, forza, rilevo, è perfetta. Ivi sono ritratti un pavone, un cotorno e un bacil da barbiero espressamente. Nel scabello vi è finta una letterina

may have been. Barbari was not only a painter, but also an engraver of merit. His engravings stand alone among the works of his contemporaries, and, though clearly influenced both by the technical execution and the antique paganism of Mantegna, have an originality of types quite their own, and a style of engraving which approaches more nearly to the northern school than to Mantegna. The half-open mouths and sentimental pose of his figures, with their languorous limbs and clinging drapery, are in strong contrast to the robust and buxom vitality which one associates with Venetian art. Barbari it was who first introduced Dürer to the proportions and measurements of the human body as a subject for study. Dürer has recorded how, when Barbari first showed him the male and female figure drawn according to measurement, he would rather have had it explained to him than received a new kingdom. Like Keats in his sonnet on Chapman's Homer, Dürer may have said—

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken.

Barbari however refused to explain the whole thing clearly to Dürer, who wanted to get it printed "for Barbari's honour and for common use." Dürer therefore being young and ignorant, but already a devoted art-student, racked his brains to try and work the matter out, and finally, after reading what Vitruvius had to say upon the matter, began that course of original studies on the subject which formed his most absorbing occupation throughout life.[1]

attaccata aperta, che pare contener el nome del maestro, e nondimeno, se si guarda sottilmente appresso, non contiene lettera alcuna, ma è tutta finta. Altri credono che la figura sii stata rifatta da Jacometto Veneziano." (*Notizia d'opere di disegno*, pubblicata e illustrata da D. Jacopo Morelli. Seconda edizione . . . di G. Frizzoni, Bologna 1884.) The suggestion might be hazarded that the barber's basin in the front of the picture is a canting device on the name Barbari or Barberino. It has been doubted by some critics whether the painter Jacometto and Jacopo dei Barbari are the same person.

[1] Dürer's statement is also seldom quoted at length. It occurs in one of the draught dedications to Pirkheimer of Dürer's book on *Proportion*, and is among the manuscripts in the British Museum. "Idoch so ich keinen find, der do Etwas beschrieben hätt van Menschlicher Mass zu machen, dann einen Mann, Jacobus genennt, van Venedig geborn, ein lieblicher Moler, Der wies mir Mann und Weib, die er aus der Mass gemacht hätt und dass ich auf diese Zeit liebr sehen wollt, was sein Meinung wär gewest dann ein neu Kunigreich, und wenn ichs hätt, so wollt ich ihms zu Ehren in Druck bringen, gemeinen Nutz zu gut. Aber ich was zu derselben Zeit noch jung und hätt nie van solchem Ding gehört. Und die Kunst ward mir fast lieben, und nahm die Ding

Dürer's sojourn in Venice was terminated by a summons from his father to return home. He has left an interesting record of his travels in the portrait of himself painted in 1493, and now in the collection of Herr Eugen Felix at Leipzig. Here we see Dürer as he appeared to the Venetians, already displaying a love of fine clothes, and holding in his hand a sprig of blue eryngium (the *Männertreue* of Germany). This portrait was originally painted on parchment, like a drawing of the *Child Christ* in the Albertina collection at Vienna which bears the same date. Over a copy of this portrait no less a personage than Goethe was once moved to enthusiasm. Such paintings on parchment were much in vogue in Basle at this date, so that it is probable that these two paintings were executed during Dürer's stay in that town. Dürer brought home with him from Venice several careful copies of engravings by Mantegna and the Paduan school, showing how deep an impression that great artist and student of the antique had made upon Dürer's mind with his novelties of perspective and audacious feats of draughtsmanship.

zu Sinn, wie man solche Ding möcht zu Wegen bringen. Dann mir wollt dieser vorgemeldt Jacobus seinen Grund nit klärlich anzeigen, das merket ich wol an ihm. Doch nahm ich mein eigen Ding für mich und las den Fitrufium, der beschreibt ein Wenig van der Gliedmass eines Manns. Also van oder aus den zweien obgenannten Mannen hab ich meinen Anfang genummen, und hab dornoch aus meinen Fürnehmen gesucht van Tag zu Tag."—*See* Lange and Fuhse's *Dürer's Schriftlicher Nachlass*, Halle, 1893.

Portrait of Albrecht Dürer in 1493; *from the painting in the collection of Herr Eugen Felix at Leipzig.*

CHAPTER II

Marriage—Early engravings—Influence of Barbari—Early paintings—Early woodcuts—The Reformation—Pirkheimer—The Apocalypse—Adam and Eve—The Life of Mary.

THE cause of Dürer's peremptory summons home was soon apparent. "After my return," writes Dürer, "Hans Frey came to terms with my father, and gave me his daughter Agnes, and two hundred gulden with her, and we were married on the Monday before St. Margaret's day (July 7), in 1494."

Dürer was now twenty-three years of age, and, though his early drawings show a wonderful amount of skill for his age, there is no trace of that precocity of productiveness which characterised some of his contemporaries, for instance Lucas van Leyden. Dürer was still more of a student than a practical artist. What he studied he absorbed into his mind, digested so to speak, and drew upon for use at subsequent periods. He was now, however, brought face to face with the struggles and difficulties of life. His father was a poor and industrious man, with a wife and two growing boys still to provide for. Hans Frey, though a man of good position, was a *dilettante* dabbler in various mechanical crafts, and it may be doubted whether Agnes Frey brought to her husband at any time more than her wedding dowry of two hundred gulden. The young couple found a home under Dürer's father's roof, and no doubt were also called upon to contribute to the economy of the Dürer household.

In painting, to succeed in which was the goal of Dürer's ambitions, he had made as yet but little progress. He could have learnt in Venice, but hardly yet had time to practise, the art of oil-painting in the manner of Antonello da Messina, but his early works are executed in the old

"tempera" manner, as in the altarpiece at Dresden. When he took to oil-painting he practised it chiefly on portraits.

It was to engraving that Dürer turned for a livelihood. There are no traces of his having executed or published any engravings on copper before his return to Nuremberg and his marriage in 1494. One is tempted to see in an anonymous engraving with four nude studies for figures of Adam and Eve an early experiment on copper by Albrecht Dürer, so striking is the resemblance of the head in the figure of Adam to that in Dürer's own portrait of 1493. Expert authorities however have shown that the technical execution of the engraving is not only quite different from that of Dürer, but is also in close affinity to one or two other contemporary engravers.

Dismissing this engraving, of which the only impression is in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, there remain several engravings which must have been executed between the summer of 1494 and 1497, the latter date being the first which appears on any plate engraved by Dürer. In his early engravings Dürer remains faithful to the method of the Schongauer school, the firm, rather hard, and dry goldsmith's touch and line. The freedom and almost violence of Mantegna's parallel strokes of shading seem to have been alien to the more reserved and concentrating temperament of Dürer. Although a practised and accurate draughtsman, Dürer shows in his earliest prints an inexperience in the actual engraving which can only be accounted for by the supposition that they were literally his first attempts at copperplate-engraving. Perhaps the earliest in date is the unsigned print of *Death as a Ravisher*, which is entirely in Dürer's manner, though some have declined to admit it as his work. In this, one of the manifold representations of the omnipresence and omnipotence of Death, which had so powerful a hold on the popular imagination at this date, the figure of Death is Dürer's own conception, not a gibbering skeleton as in Holbein's work, but the ragged corpse-like wild man of the woods, whom we meet again in *The Four Riders* of the Apocalypse, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, and *The Arms of Death*. Next come three engravings, which bear Dürer's monogram in its earliest forms—*The Love-Bargain*, a familiar study of sensuality and avarice, and *The Six Soldiers*, signed , and *The Holy Family with the Locust*, signed . In the last, which may possibly be the earliest of all, there is an

attempt to cope with difficulties of grouping and perspective which has not been wholly successful. The unsuccessful foreshortening of the figure of Joseph in this last engraving lends some colour to the views of those who would see in the engravings of *The Great Courier* and *The Conversion of St. Paul*[1] early and unsuccessful attempts of Dürer as an engraver. With these four early engravings may be grouped *The Promenade*, another Death subject, in which a handsome pair of lovers walk unconscious of the vicinity and menaces of the common enemy. These five engravings, with their landscape backgrounds, show a distinct attempt to produce a picturesque effect on the copper, an advance already on the Schongauer school, where the skill of the engraver was chiefly exercised in the simple representation of the subject.

Next came a group of small engravings, treated more delicately and in the Schongauer manner—that is to say, in simple line without the introduction of a landscape background, and in general handling rather suggestive of the work of Jacopo dei Barbari : these are *The Peasant and his Wife*, *The Three Peasants*, *The Cook and the Housekeeper*, *The Oriental Family*, and *The Little Fortune*. The last is probably, if the *Adam and Eve* studies be set aside, Dürer's first engraving of the nude. It is noteworthy that in three of these early engravings—*Death as a Ravisher*, *The Holy Family with the Locust*, and *The Little Fortune*—a plant of eryngium occurs similar to that held in Dürer's hand in his portrait of 1493. Two small engravings with landscape backgrounds may be classed with these early prints—*The Lady on Horseback with a Lanzknecht* and *The Little Courier*, and with these *The Monstrous Pig*, important to those to whom the fixing of dates is the chief object, since this abortion is known to have actually been born in 1496.

Perhaps a little later come three larger and more ambitious compositions, more genuinely pictures on copper than those mentioned before—*The Penitence of St. John Chrysostom* (sometimes known erroneously as *St. Geneviève*), *St. Jerome in Penitence*, and *The Prodigal Son*. The last is a well-known and popular engraving, for which a preliminary drawing exists in the British Museum. Both drawing and engraving show the same fault in the drawing of the Prodigal's limbs, and testify to the fidelity with which Dürer transferred his carefully prepared drawings on to the

[1] The only known impressions of these are in the Print Room at Dresden.

The Promenade. From an engraving by A. Dürer.

copper. Here Dürer displays that mingling of pathos and humour which is so stimulating to human sympathy. The delightful and yet wholly unobtrusive humour of the pigs is an excellent foil to the haggard and heartrending expression of the poor prodigal.

The Prodigal Son. From a drawing by A. Dürer, in the Print Room, British Museum.

In the *St. Jerome* a new phase commences of Dürer's career as an engraver. No student of the engravings by Jacopo dei Barbari can fail to be struck by the similarity between the figure of St. Jerome and some of those in Barbari's engravings. It appears to be certain that during the

last few years of the fifteenth century Barbari visited Nuremberg and resided there some time. Many of his engravings are printed on the same paper which was used by Dürer, though this does not necessarily prove that they were printed in Nuremberg, since the paper could easily have been obtained in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice. But from this time for a period Dürer's engravings show distinct traces of the influence of Barbari, and the presence of Barbari at Nuremberg would make the personal association of the two artists for this period very probable. Barbari, as the older man, naturally influenced Dürer, especially in his choice of subjects, his types of face, and treatment of the nude. Dürer's training as a goldsmith no doubt helped him to see that the delicate graver-work of Barbari, however useful for artistic fame, was of inferior commercial value to the firmer and more durable work of the Schongauer school.

To this, which may be termed the Barbari period of Dürer's career, belong the four prints *The Rape of Amymone* (*Das Meerwunder*), *Hercules* (*Eifersucht* or *Hahnreih*), *The Four Naked Women*, and *The Dream*, all remarkable for the studies of the nude, the elaborate landscape backgrounds and accessories, and the general obscurity of their meaning. In the *Hercules* certain figures are taken directly from a drawing adapted from a North Italian engraving of *The Death of Orpheus*, and brought home by Dürer from Italy in 1494; the figure of Deianeira (if this be the right interpretation) is borrowed from the drawn copy of Mantegna's *Fight of Tritons* of the same date. The whole composition is, however, worked up into a group which is thoroughly Dürer's own, and forms perhaps the most important and instructive of his early engravings. The subject is obscure, and it is sometimes called *The Effects of Jealousy* (*Eifersucht*); but it is spoken of by Dürer himself as *Ercules*, and probably is a mediæval rendering of the story of Nessus and Deianeira, a similar subject occurring in later series of the *Labours of Hercules*, one in a series of French engravings attributed to Geoffroy Tory, and executed about 1529, being obviously based on Dürer's composition. In *The Rape of Amymone* (the *Meerwunder*, as Dürer himself calls it) a nude nymph is borne away on the back of Glaucus, a marine deity; the composition offers similar types, but still greater affinity to the work of Barbari. It appears to be based on a drawing of *The Rape of Europa*, which is accompanied on

the same sheet by some studies of lions' heads, traditionally said to have been done in Venice, and two figures immediately copied from Barbari. This group was probably altered by Dürer to the more obscure fable, in order to introduce the figure of Glaucus with its resemblance to Barbari's *Triton and Nymph.* In *The Four Naked Women*, the first engraving by Dürer with a date, and also the first which bears his monogram in its familiar state, the same female type occurs: the group with its enigmatical meaning, which perhaps Dürer would alone be able to explain, is probably nothing more than a group of nude studies which, by the addition of a few emblematical accessories, has been converted by Dürer into an allegory of obscure import. It is characteristic of much of Dürer's engraved work that the central motive of the work is to present some study in draughtsmanship, and by adding certain accessory objects—what he himself would call his "traumwerk"—to invest the whole composition with a mysterious significance. So in *The Dream* the nude female figure is obviously the chief motive, the allegory of the sleeping student being analogous to that in Barbari's engraving *Custodi nos dormientes.*

The popularity and commercial success of Dürer's engravings are shown by the rapidity with which pirate copies were made and put upon the market. The chief purveyors of these copies were Israhel van Meckenem, a goldsmith of Bocholt in Westphalia, where he kept a workshop, from which, until his death in 1503, issued numerous copies of the engravings of the Master E. S., Martin Schongauer, and eventually Dürer; and Wenzel von Olmütz,[1] who devoted his attention chiefly to the works of Schongauer, the Master P. W. of Cologne, and Dürer. Copies by Meckenem exist of *The Holy Family with the Locust*, *The Promenade*, and *The Four Naked Women.* The last two were also copied by Wenzel with *Hercules*, *The Rape of Amymone*, *The Dream*, and others of Dürer's early engravings. It is an argument against the publication of Barbari's engravings in Nuremberg or anywhere in Germany that had

[1] It is perhaps necessary to point out that the otherwise admirable Life of Dürer by the late Dr. M. Thausing of Vienna (translated into English and edited by F. A. Eaton) is marred by an unfortunate identification of the engraver W. with M. Wolgemut, Dürer's master, instead of with the mere copyist Wenzel, whose authorship of these engravings has been clearly proved by Dr. Max Lehrs of Dresden.

they been known and circulated in Germany they could hardly have escaped the vigilance of these and other pirates.

Allusion has been made to the elaborate landscape backgrounds of some of these engravings. Dürer was from an early age a careful student of nature, and a number of drawings have been preserved, views of scenery in or near Nuremberg, which are minutely executed in a kind of gouache or in water-colours, perhaps the earliest use of these for purely pictorial art, as opposed to that of the illuminist or miniature-painter. In the British Museum there is a fascinating drawing of the river Pegnitz near Nuremberg, in which there stands on an island one of those tall gabled houses which formed part of the outworks of a fortified city. This building, the "Weierhaus" of the drawing, existed until quite lately. It was introduced by Dürer into the background of one of his most attractive engravings, *The Virgin and Child with the Monkey*, one which was quickly pirated by Wenzel von Olmütz and others. Dürer's hand was now strong and precise upon the copper, and the smaller engravings of *The Virgin with Flowing Hair on a Crescent*, the two *St. Sebastians*, *The Virgin and St. Anne*, *Justice*, *The Standard Bearer*, and *The Man of Sorrows*, all executed in the simple line manner, show a great advance on the smaller prints of a few years back.

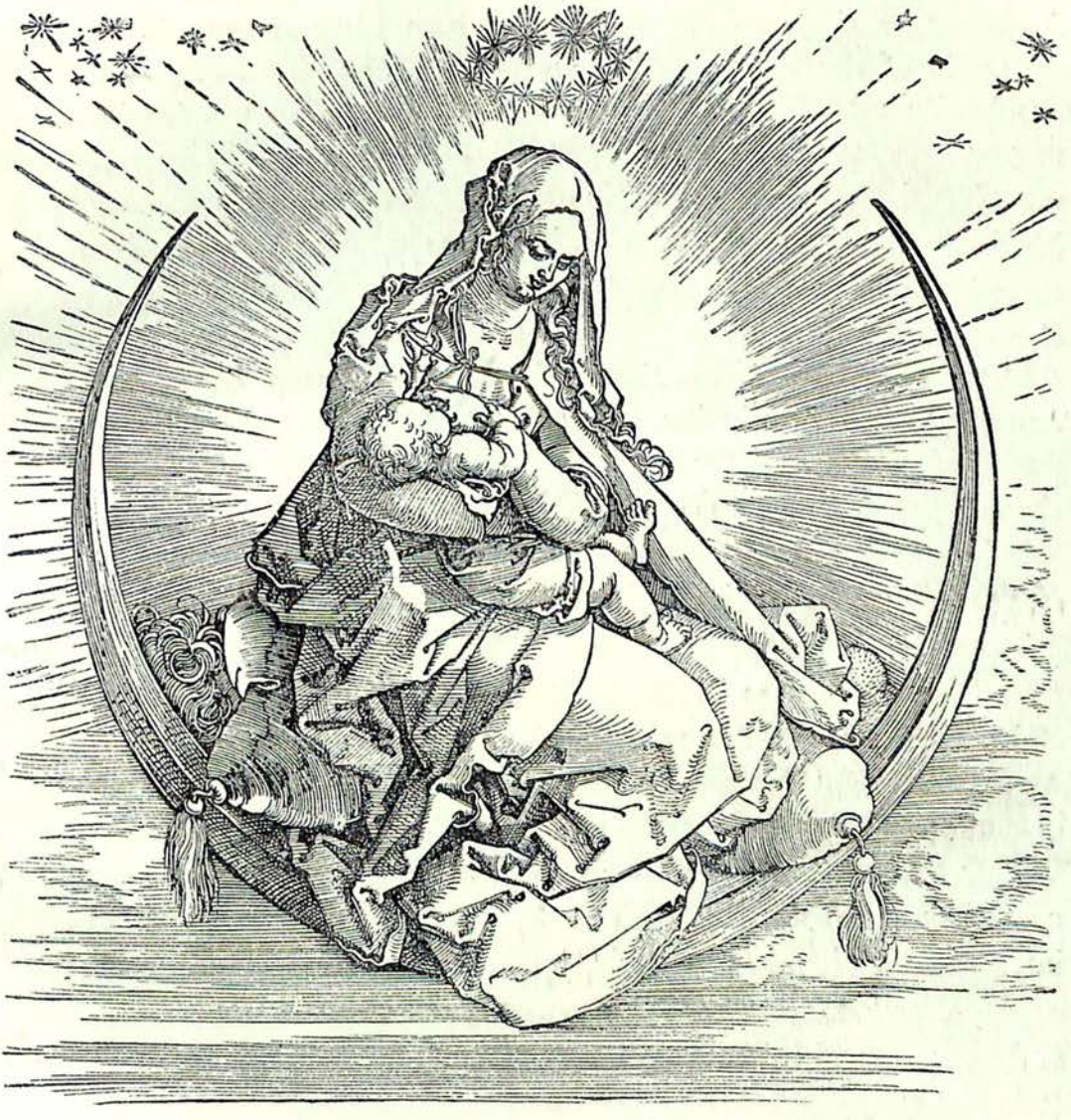
Copperplate-engraving by no means occupied all Dürer's time. Painting was still his most cherished art, the Mantegna-like altarpiece at Dresden being his first important work, in which the centre group of the Virgin and Child is full of the small incidents of German home-life which Dürer so frequently introduced, while the figures of St. Anthony and St. Sebastian on the wings are powerful studies from the life. In this picture also occur the child-angels in which Dürer specially delighted. For the next few years his paintings were chiefly portraits, such as those of his father (1497), now at Sion House; more than one portrait of a fair Madonna-like maiden of the Fürleger family; various members of the Tucher family; the wonderful portrait of Oswolt Krell (1499), now at Munich; and his own portrait in gaily coloured dress (1498), now at Madrid. With his pen and pencil he was never idle, and wood-engraving now revealed to him special opportunities for the use of his skill as a draughtsman. The *Briefmaler* and *Formschneider*, male and female, were well known in Nuremberg among craftsmen for

many years before Dürer. The art of wood-engraving had risen little above the level of a mechanical craft until the time of Koberger, who first called in the assistance of superior draughtsmen. It was Dürer, however, who by perfecting the skill of the wood-engraver and by means of his own admirable designs on the woodblock first brought the art to rank high in the hierarchy of the arts. Before his time, the woodcut as a separate picture in black and white, independent of colour, unaccompanied by explanatory text, and used for ornamental and not for mere utilitarian purposes, could hardly be said to exist.

Dürer, as has been seen, very probably worked in his boyhood as a *Briefmaler* or *Formschneider* for Koberger at Nuremberg, and almost certainly for Amerbach at Basle: witness the *St. Jerome* woodblock of 1492. At Venice he would have seen what beautiful results could be obtained by care both in designing and cutting the woodblocks for the ornaments and illustrations of books. In Venice, too, were produced at this date fine woodcuts on a very large scale; but it is doubtful whether any of these were published anterior to *The Apocalypse* of Dürer. So Dürer now set up for himself a working studio in his father's house at Nuremberg, and, bringing his own early training to bear on his assistants, inaugurated a new era of wood-engraving as a pictorial art.

The earliest woodcut thus produced by Dürer appears to be *The Men's Bath*, a group of nude men in one of the open-air public baths in Nuremberg. The town was noted for its many baths in the ever-useful Pegnitz, and its cobbler poet, Hans Sachs, chronicles these public baths as among its chief glories. Here no doubt came Dürer very often in pursuit of his studies of the nude. The drawing of this woodcut, and that for *The Women's Bath*, dated 1496, and preserved at Bremen, of which a woodcut also exists, though possibly not published in Dürer's lifetime, were made in this way, and the engraving of *The Four Naked Women*, mentioned before, was probably composed from similar studies. Drawings of these baths also exist, done by Dürer in later years. The youthful spectator gazing over the palisade in *The Men's Bath* is perhaps the young artist himself. On the same scale, and drawn in the same bold and masterly manner, are the woodcuts of *Samson and the Lion*, *The Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints in Nicomedia*, *Hercules* (another obscure version

of one of the *Labours*), *The Knight and Foot-soldier* (an equestrian study similar to, though on a larger scale, the engravings of *The Little Courier* and *The Lady on Horseback*), and *The Holy Family with the Hares*, in which the animals disport themselves in gay *insouciance* of the solemnity



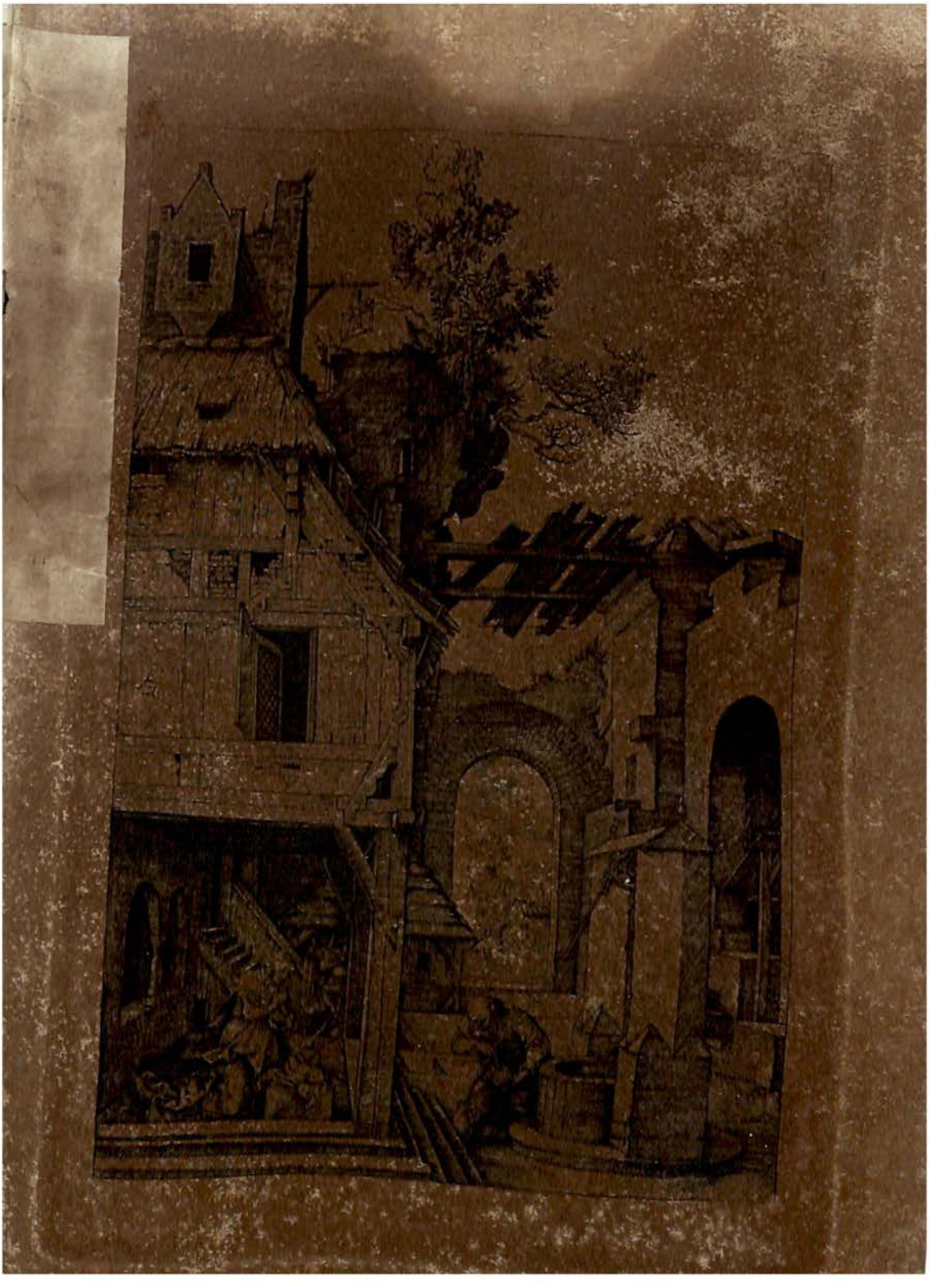
The Virgin and Child. Woodcut title-page to "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reduced).

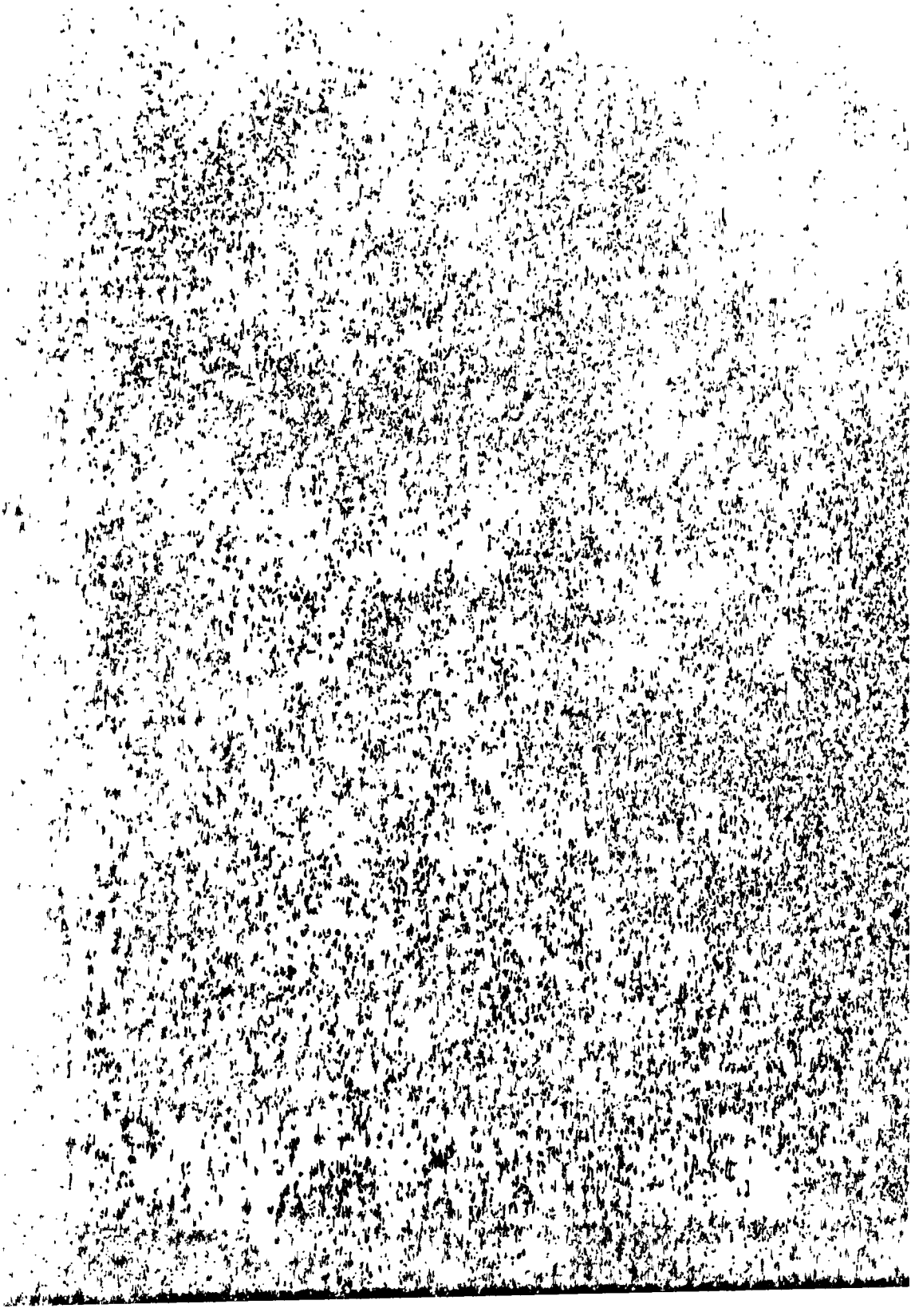
of their surroundings. But Dürer was meanwhile planning a work to be engraved on wood which has remained one of the great achievements of the graphic arts, which called out all his artistic skill and invention, and which reflects not only the internal thoughts and aspirations of Dürer's

own mind, but the sentiments and emotions of the age in which he lived. This was the famous series of illustrations to *The Apocalypse*, the trumpet-call, or *réveille*, as it may be called, of the Reformation.

Two events of singular importance occurred during Dürer's *Wanderjahre*—the accessions of a new Pope and a new Emperor. Under any circumstances these events would have been exciting enough, but the characters of the two men thus elevated were so remarkable that there was hardly a human being in the civilised world who was not in some way or other affected by them. In 1492 the infamous Roderigo Borgia was elected Pope under the title of Alexander VI., and in August 1493 Maximilian of Austria, who had already acquired by marriage the sovereignty of the Netherlands, succeeded his father as Emperor of Germany.

The excesses and exactions of the Papacy soon began to excite murmurs of disapprobation, especially in Germany, where the printing-press had now opened the gates of knowledge to the laity and afforded a channel for the expression of criticism and free thought. From the printing-presses at Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Basle there poured forth a stream of literature with which all the allied powers of autocracy and priesthood were inadequate to cope. Theology no longer kept the key turned on the human intellect. The writings of the ancients in poetry and philosophy, the *Literæ Humaniores* of the schools, brought men to consider man for man's sake, as well as for God's. Authors of their own country began to be read as well as the classics or the writings of the Church Fathers. No town was so well adapted to receive and foster the new ideas as Nuremberg, with its burgher government and commerical intercourse with other countries, and by its daily practice of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The great book-merchant of Nuremberg, Koberger, must be regarded as one of the pioneers of the Reformation. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his godson Albrecht Dürer was on terms of friendship with the leading men of culture and learning in Nuremberg. Among these were Conrad Celtes, Maximilian's poet laureate; Peter Dannhäuser, author of the *Archetypus Triumphantis Romæ*; Lazarus Spengler, the town secretary, poet, jurist, theologian, and friend of Luther and Melanchthon; Melchior Pfinzing, provost of St. Sebald, court poet and polisher of Maximilian's verses; and, above all,





Willibald Pirkheimer. The friendship of Dürer and Pirkheimer is famous in history, but it is difficult to say for certain when and where they first met. Although Dürer was born in part of a house which belonged to a member of the Pirkheimer family, it could hardly have been there that the two first met. Pirkheimer, who was about six months older than Dürer, was born on December 5, 1470, at Eichstädt, where his father was then living. He was educated there, and went in 1490 to Italy, where he remained seven years, studying Greek and jurisprudence at Padua and Pavia. He did not settle in Nuremberg till 1497. He was well known to Maximilian, and intrusted by the Emperor with an imperial command in the Swiss war of 1499. It must have been during his visit to Italy that Dürer was first brought into contact with the clever, lusty, hot-headed young Pirkheimer, in every way a great contrast to so quiet and refined a student-artist as Dürer. The only traces of coarseness in the whole of Dürer's works or writings have reference to or were suggested by Pirkheimer. Pirkheimer was a good scholar and writer, and doubtless assisted Dürer a great deal in this way, since Dürer, though an indefatigable student, does not seem to have had much acquaintance with Latin or Greek. Yet much as Pirkheimer wrote and studied, valued as he was by his contemporaries, it is entirely due to his friendship with Dürer that posterity bestows one glance upon his countenance, or fingers the leaves of any of his literary productions.

These Humanist friends of Dürer had a large share in the promotion of the Reformation. Reform, and not revolution, was in the air. The contest against the immoralities of the Borgian clique at Rome, against the traffic in indulgences, or against the attempted suppression of the freedom of the press, was in no way directed against the main dogmas or practices of the Catholic Church. To Dürer, among the rest, Mary was still the Mother of Christ and the Queen of Heaven. Saints and relics were as great an object of reverence as before. Only there was working in the minds of the German people the idea that a new age was soon about to open upon the world—an age of freedom, goodness, and humanity which they believed to be the long-awaited millennium, and to have been foreshadowed in the Bible by the Apocalypse of St. John.

The invention of printing was followed quickly by the translation of the Bible from Latin into German. The importance attached to the

Apocalypse is shown by the number of illustrations to it in the Bible first published by Quentel at Cologne in 1480, and by Koberger again at Nuremberg in 1483. As this edition of Koberger's was published when Dürer was a boy of twelve, it was no doubt the object of his constant study. Hence his illustrations of the Apocalypse follow closely in the lines of those in Koberger's Bible. The strange, awe-inspiring, almost bizarre imagery of the Apocalypse appealed strongly to an imagination like that of Dürer, with its creative instincts and dreamy enthusiasm. Adhering closely to the text, he produced a series of original creations in pictorial art which carry the spectator away by the strength and boldness of their conception. These woodcuts are too well known to need detailed description here, and words would fail at any time to convey any idea of them. Allusion must, however, be made to the beautiful serene landscapes in the lower part of *The Throne set in Heaven* and *The Archangel Michael's Combat with the Dragon;* to the all-compelling majesty and force of *The Four Riders*, with its grim figure of Death trampling on the human race, or of *The Four Angels of the Euphrates;* and to the vivid realism of the falling star in *The Opening of the Seventh Seal.* Reminiscences of Dürer's Italian journey sometimes occur, for in *The Opening of the Fifth and Sixth Seal* a group of terrified women is borrowed directly from Mantegna, and whereas in *The Woman Clothed in the Sun* a regular placid German type is displayed, in *Babylon the Great* the Scarlet Woman is a Venetian courtesan, such as Carpaccio has painted in a picture in the Museo Correr at Venice. In the *St. Michael* both the figure of the saint and the demons floating in the air are reminiscent of Dürer's precursor Schongauer. Throughout is symbolised the triumph of Christ over the powers of the Emperor and the Pope, the latter being specially selected as the object of the Divine vengeance. Two editions of the Apocalypse were published by Dürer in 1498, one with German and one with Latin text, printed under his own immediate supervision and perhaps with his own hands.

With the exception of a few illustrations to the works of Conrad Celtes, Dürer's attention for the next few years was chiefly devoted to painting or to engraving on copper. The care which he bestowed on every picture or engraving accounts for the comparatively small number of works produced by him at this period. The pictures completed

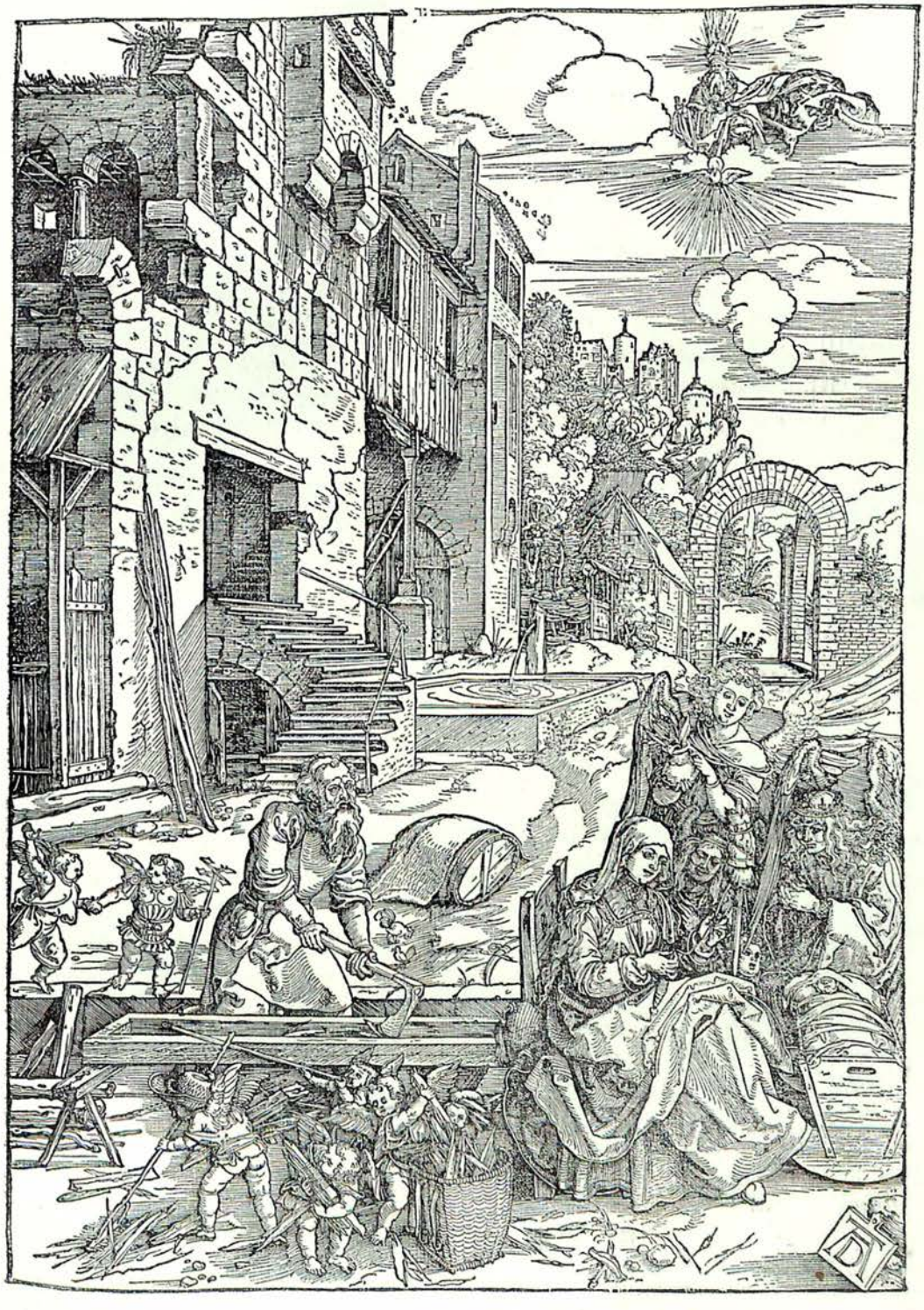
The Babylonish Whore. From a woodcut in "The Apocalypse," by A. Dürer.

during the next few years from 1499 to 1504 were the two *Pietás*, or *Lamentations over Christ's Body*—one at Munich, and the other, originally painted for the Holzschuher family, still at Nuremberg; *The Crucifixion*, now at Ober St. Veit, painted in 1502 for Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, whose portrait, painted by Dürer about this date, is now at Berlin; *The Nativity*, with the portraits of the two Baumgärtners in armour, now at Munich; and *The Adoration of the Kings*, painted in 1504, and now in the Uffizi at Florence. Ever since his first journey to Venice, and probably in consequence of his intercourse with Jacopo dei Barbari, Dürer had spent much time on making the most minute studies of natural objects, animals, insects, vegetables, and the like. Nearly all such studies can be traced among the accessories to his paintings and engravings, and they are often interpolated in bewildering profusion, not unfrequently, especially in his later works, disturbing the balance of the composition. The copperplate-engravings of these years are *Apollo and Diana*, *St. George on Foot*, *The Arms of Death* (1503), *The Virgin Giving Suck to the Child* (1503), *The Nativity* (1504), and *Adam and Eve* (1504). Of these *The Virgin and Child* is one of the sweetest and tenderest renderings of the subject which Dürer produced, and also one of his best engravings, and *The Nativity*, or the *Weihnacht* (Christmas), as Dürer himself called it, is unrivalled for the quiet, placid, happy domesticity of the scene, as well as for the consummate skill of the perspective and general composition. The *Adam and Eve* ranks amongst the most important of Dürer's works. In it are seen the results of Dürer's studies into the proportions of the human body, and the triumph of his attempts to produce a chiaroscuro effect in a copperplate-engraving. Moreover, Dürer has left so many drawings for this composition, and also unfinished states of the engraving, that it is possible to trace its whole history. Starting from the studies of proportion, instigated by Jacopo dei Barbari, Dürer is seen, first, entering into competition with one of Barbari's engravings, *Apollo and Diana*, with a similar engraving of his own; then taking the motive of Barbari's engravings in a drawing of his own (in the British Museum), but altering the figure of Apollo into a version of the Apollo Belvedere. After experimenting with this Apollo as an Æsculapius (drawing in Beckerath collection at Berlin), he, by reversing the figure of Apollo, turned it into Adam, as in the engraving; to this he added a companion

The Birth of the Virgin Mary. Woodcut from "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reduced).

drawing of the figure of Eve (both these last drawings are in the Albertina collection at Vienna), and then combined the two figures in one composition (drawing in the Lanna collection at Prague) as in the engraving, though in reverse. The unfinished states of the engraving show how carefully Dürer elaborated the dark masses of the background in order to throw into relief the nude bodies, in the earliest state these figures being left in outline. Thus the real motive of this wonderful engraving is to produce ideal figures of a man and a woman as exemplified by Adam and Eve before the Fall. Similar motives are evident in two well-known and admirable engravings of 1505—*The Little White Horse* and *The Great Horse*, the motive in each case being to produce an exact figure of a horse, Dürer being nearly as much interested in the proportions of the horse as in those of the human body. The accessories which invest these two engravings with a mystic character are merely the additions of Dürer's own fantasy, in order to make the composition more complete.

Meanwhile Dürer, while producing a number of wood-engravings of lesser importance, had commenced another series, to be published in book-form, and selected for this purpose the life of the Virgin Mary from her birth to her deification. In this series there is none of the majesty or terror of *The Apocalypse*. The story is told in incidents of a reposeful nature, with considerable humour in some of the earlier scenes and deep pathos in the later. The scene of *The Flight into Egypt* is reminiscent of the earlier engraving of the same subject by Martin Schongauer ; but otherwise the series is replete with incidents of a domestic character, such as the chattering housewives in the scene of *The Birth of Mary*, or the peddling stallholder in that of *The Presentation in the Temple*. In others, such as *The Holy Family in the Carpenter's Shop*, or in the final scene of *The Adoration of Mary*, Dürer fills the scene with the child-angels in whose gambols he took so much delight. It seems probable also that about this time Dürer commenced his series of *The Large Passion* on the same scale and with the same note of earnestness as *The Apocalypse*, since the woodcut of *The Holy Women Lamenting over the Body of Christ* was among those copied by Marcantonio, with Dürer's monogram affixed. Both series, however—*The Life of Mary* and *The Great Passion*—remained unfinished, when a break of an important nature occurred in Dürer's life, the cause of which has been interpreted in various ways.



The Holy Family. Woodcut from "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reduced).

CHAPTER III.

Dürer's home-life—His portraits—Second visit to Venice—Marcantonio—Letters to Pirkheimer—Return to Nuremberg—Large paintings—Engravings and woodcuts—St. Eustace and Nemesis—The Passion—Dürer's house—Dürer as a poet—Dry points and etchings.

DÜRER had come to occupy a prominent position among the citizens of Nuremberg. He was on terms of friendship with all the leading patrician families, whose armorial bearings are so prominent in the great churches of Nuremberg: Kress, Tucher, Nützel, Harsdorffer, Volckamer, Baumgärtner, Ebner, Holzschuher, Löffelholtz, and the great banking family of Imhoff. Powerful and rich as many of these patrician families were, the municipal government of Nuremberg seems always to have obtained a reputation for closeness and thriftiness in expenditure. Patronage of art does not seem to have been a desirable charge on the citizens' pockets, so that such commissions for works of art as were given at all were usually for the honour or gratification of some private individual or family. In this respect the Republic of Nuremberg presents a strong contrast to the Venetian Republic, which gloried in the artistic decoration of their streets and public buildings at the expense of the citizens themselves. Venice was ever extending its borders and its privileges, while Nuremberg drew them tighter and tighter, as its citizens did the strings of their purses. Painting, too, was a free trade in Nuremberg. No protection was offered to native artists as at Antwerp and elsewhere. The principle may have been a good one, but it effectually checked the production of any native art of a high class in Nuremberg. Wealth therefore Dürer, as an artist, seems never to have been able to acquire. In 1502 he lost his father, and thereby was forced to find a home for himself and his wife Agnes, into which, in 1504, he received his widowed mother and his boy brother Hans. This must have been a serious

addition to his incumbrances, while the demands made upon his society by Pirkheimer and others, with his evident taste for fine clothes and good living, must have caused the thrifty Agnes many heart-searchings, and perhaps tended to acidulate her temper. The remarks of Pirkheimer about Dürer's wife after his friend's death have led to the unfortunate Agnes being set down as a modern Xantippe, and, to combat this, recent writers have rushed into the other extreme in order to clear her entirely of all blame. There seems no reason to believe that she made Dürer's life unhappy, or that she was other than a careful, thrifty housewife, on whom depended all the economy and stability of the household. Dürer was of too dreamy and docile a nature to be able to look properly after his own affairs, or to mind leaving them in the hands of his wife. Romance was entirely absent from his domestic life. His marriage was childless, and this was doubtless a deep sorrow to Dürer, for in all his works he shows a love for little children, and a keen appreciation of the humours of child-life. This lack of interest in his home-life no doubt led him to give much time to the society of his friends, which would account for any hostility shown by Agnes to Pirkheimer and others. It is noteworthy, however, that while Dürer has left most touching records of his love for his father and mother, he makes but little more than mere mention of his wife. It is always "my dear father and my dear mother," but never "my dear wife."

Winged Genius. From the engraving known as "The Dream," by A. Dürer.

Dürer's appearance at this time is well known to posterity. No artist, except perhaps Rembrandt, took so much delight in the portrayal of his own self. Starting with the boyish drawings at Vienna and Erlangen, then come the portraits of 1493 and 1498. Already in the last the gay garments and carefully curled hair show that Dürer was fully conscious of his own personal attractions. The most famous portrait is that now at Munich, executed shortly after 1500. Joachim Camerarius,

writing of Dürer after his death, says that "Nature bestowed on him a body remarkable in build and stature, and not unworthy of the noble mind it contained. His head was intelligent (*argutum*), his eyes flashing, his nose nobly formed, and, as the Greeks say, τετράγωνον. His neck was rather long, his chest broad, his body not too stout, his thighs muscular, his legs firm and steady. But his fingers—you would vow you had never seen anything more elegant." These features are clearly shown in the Munich portrait, and especially the beautiful hands. Camerarius goes on to say that "almost with awe have we gazed upon the bearded face of the man, drawn by himself, in the manner we have described, with the brush on the canvas and without any previous sketch. The locks of the beard are almost a cubit long, so exquisitely and cleverly drawn," &c. No one who gazes on the Munich portrait can fail to see in it the delineation of a gentle, serene, pure, and trustful character. The whole portrait is strongly suggestive of the ideal type of Jesus Christ, and in fact Dürer perceived this himself, as there is hardly any representation of Christ by Dürer which does not recall the features of the man himself. Looking on the Munich portrait, one is reminded of Roydon's lines on Sir Philip Sidney :—

A sweet attractive kind of grace ;
A half assurance given by looks,
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of gospel books,
I trow that countenance cannot lie
Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.

The break in Dürer's life was caused by his decision to pay a second visit to Venice. His fame as an artist had preceded him there through his engravings, which were not only appreciated but copied freely and often very closely by the engravers in Venice and Bologna. Zoan Andrea, Giulio Campagnola, Nicoletto da Modena, Robetta, Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, all paid homage to Dürer by the use which they made of his engravings. Chief among them, however, was the famous engraver Marcantonio Raimondi, who literally pirated Dürer's engravings, copying even his signature, translating even the woodcuts, including the unfinished series of *The Life of Mary*, on to copper. It would seem that it was by copying Dürer that Marcantonio, like the Wierixes in later days, obtained his noted skill as an engraver.

Portrait of Albrecht Durer by himself; from the painting in the Alte Pinakothek at Munich.

In his account of Marcantonio, Vasari asserts that it was owing to the piracy of his engravings that Dürer came to Venice. The inaccuracies in Vasari's account have led to this story being regarded as a fable, but in all probability Dürer took some steps to prevent the circulation of fraudulent copies with his signature, for the copies of Dürer's *Little Passion*, made by Marcantonio in after years, do not bear Dürer's monogram; and Dürer, on his return to Nuremberg, not only issued a manifesto against such pirates, but obtained a privilege from the town council to protect him.[1] It was probably through Marcantonio that Dürer's work was brought to the notice of Raphael, who sent Dürer a drawing of his own in exchange for a specimen of Dürer's work, and is said to have always had Dürer's prints at hand in his studio.

Dürer's second visit to Venice was in quite a new character. Whereas, on the former visit, he was a shy, retiring student, he was now the famous engraver, the creator of those wonderful prints which one bought under the arches of the Piazza in Venice. A new race, however, of young painters had sprung up, including Titian and Giorgione, who seem to have looked askance at first on the advent of their northern

[1] The story as given by Vasari is as follows: "Intanto capitando in Vinezia alcuni fiaminghi con molte carte intagliate e stampate in legno ed in rame d'Alberto Duro, vennero vedute a Marcantonio in su la piazza di San Marco: perchè stupefatto della maniera del lavoro e del modo di fare d'Alberto, spese in dette carte quasi quanti danari aveva portati da Bologna, e fra l'altre cose comperò la Passione de Gesù Cristo intagliata in 36 pezzi di legno in quarto foglio, stata stampata di poco dal detto Alberto: la quale opera cominciava dal peccare d'Adamo ed essere cacciato di Paradiso dall' Angelo, infino al mandare dello Spirito Santo. E considerato Marcantonio quanto onore ed utile si avrebbe potuto acquistare, che si fusse dato a quell 'arte in Italia, si dispose di volervi attendere con ogni accuratezza e diligenza; e così cominciò a centrafare di quegli intagli d'Alberto, studiando il modo de' tratti ed il tutto delle stampe che avea comperate: le quali per la novità e bellezza loro erano in tanta riputazione, che ognuno cercava d'averne. Avendo dunque contrafatto in rame d'intaglio grosso, come era il legno che aveva intagliato Alberto, tutta la detta Passione e vita di Cristo in 36 carte; e fattovi il segno che Alberto faceva nelle sue opere, cioè questo, A.D.; riuscì tanto simile, di maniera che non sapendo nessuno ch' elle fussero fatte da Marcantonio, erano credute d'Alberto, e per opere di lui vendute e comperate: la qual cosa essendo scritta in Fiandra ad Alberto, e mandatogli una di dette Passioni contrafatte da Marcantonio, venne Alberto in tante collera, che partitosi di Fiandra se ne venne a Vinezia, e ricorso alla Signoria, si querelò di Marcantonio; ma però non ottenne altro, se non che Marcantonio non facesse più il nome e nè il segno sopradetto d'Alberto nelle sue opere."

rival. Even Dürer found a change. Writing to Pirkheimer from Venice, on February 7, 1506, he says :—

"I wish that you were here at Venice! There are so many nice fellows among the Italians, who seek my society more and more, which is very soothing to one's heart, learned men of importance, good players on the lute and the pipe, with great knowledge in painting, with much noble sentiment and honest virtue, and they treat me with great honour and friendship. On the other hand, there are also the most untrustworthy, perjured, thievish rascals as ever lived on the earth. Did one not know this, one would think them the nicest folk on earth. As for myself, I cannot help laughing when they talk to me. They know that their rascality is notorious, but nobody minds.

"I have many good friends among the Italians, who warn me not to eat and drink with their painters. They, however, are very hostile to me, and counterfeit my work in churches and wherever they come across it; afterwards they abuse it and say that it is not antique style, and, therefore, cannot be good. Giambellino however it was who praised my work highly before several nobles. He wanted very much to have some of my work, and came himself to me and begged me to do something for him, which he could pay well for. And all people tell me how upright a man he is, so that I am equally friendly to him. He is very old, and is still the best in painting here.

"And the thing which pleased me so much eleven years ago pleases me no more; had I not seen it myself I should not have believed any one else. Moreover, I let you know that there are many better painters here than Master Jakob, who is again abroad; yet Anton Kolb is ready to swear an oath that no better painter lives than Master Jakob. Others scoff at him, and say that were he so good he would have remained here, and so on."

In this last paragraph it can hardly be doubted that the thing with which he was no longer satisfied was the art of Jacopo dei Barbari. The rising stars of Giorgione and Titian cannot fail to have impressed Dürer, and to have dispelled the illusion under which he laboured as to Barbari's proper rank as a painter. Barbari had been to Nuremberg, and had returned to Venice, probably to execute for Kolb the great woodcut view of Venice which that merchant commissioned and

published in 1500. He had then gone north again in the service of Philip of Burgundy, and was destined to finish his days probably at Brussels in the service of Maximilian's daughter Margaret, then Regent of the Netherlands.

Though ready to acknowledge Dürer's pre-eminence as an engraver, the Venetian artists, always with the exception of the aged Bellini, seem to have denied his merits as a painter. This may have stirred up the German colony near the Rialto, who had just rebuilt their Fondaco, to which was attached the small church of S. Bartolommeo. The Nuremberg merchants gave Dürer a commission to paint an altarpiece for the choir in this church, in which was the German burial-place. This painting represented *The Feast of the Rosary*, and contained portraits of Maximilian, Julius II., Dürer, Pirkheimer, and several German merchants. It is satisfactory to know that the Venetian painters fully recognised the merits of this work, and treated Dürer with greater honour. Bellini even paid a visit to Dürer to learn how he managed to execute such marvellously fine hair-painting, and was astonished to see Dürer do it straight off.

While he was in Italy Dürer visited Bologna, "to learn the secrets of the art of perspective, which a man is willing to teach me," where, as his friend Scheurl testified, he was received by the artist colony, and entertained as the prince of painters. His fame also reached Mantua, where the aged Mantegna was lying on his death-bed. Camerarius narrates that "while Andrea was lying ill at Mantua he heard that Albrecht was in Italy, and had him summoned to his side at once, in order that he might fortify Albrecht's facility and certainty of hand with scientific knowledge and principles. For Andrea often lamented, in conversation with his friends, that Albrecht's facility in drawing had not been granted to him, nor his knowledge to Albrecht. On receiving the message, Albrecht, leaving all other engagements, prepared for the journey without delay. But before he could reach Mantua, Andrea was dead [September 13, 1506], and Dürer used to say that this was the saddest event in all his life; for, high as Dürer stood, his great and lofty mind was ever striving after something yet above him."

Another great artist with whose works Dürer now became acquainted was Leonardo da Vinci. It does not seem likely that the

two artists ever met, but he may have been brought into relation with him through Luca Pacioli, the author of the book *De Divina Proportione*, which appeared at Venice in 1509, and an intimate friend of the great Leonardo. Dürer would naturally be deeply interested in the proportion theories of Leonardo and Pacioli. He was certainly acquainted with some engravings of Leonardo's school, representing a curious circle of concentric scrollwork on a black ground, one of them entitled *Accademia Leonardi Vinci;* for he himself executed six woodcuts in imitation, the *Six Knots*, as he calls them himself. Dürer was amused by and interested in all scientific or mathematical problems, but he had no real gift for scientific research.

It is remarkable that among Durer's countless studies of the human form there are no signs of any deep study of anatomy, such as characterised the work of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci. Having trained his eye to observe accurately, he could seize and depict the minutest details of facial expression or physical construction. His nude studies of proportion are all constructed by measurement alone. He could transfer on to the canvas or the copper the exact features of the subject before him, whether human face, limbs, stag-beetle, plant of celandine, lime-tree, or marble quarry; but he merely observed, and never, like Leonardo, made a thorough and systematic investigation of nature. Had Leonardo left no paintings behind him he would still have ranked high among the leading scientists of his day, among whom he has probably as yet not been allotted the place which is his due.

It is from Dürer's letters to Pirkheimer that some knowledge of his life at Venice and Nuremberg can be gleaned. Referring to himself, they deal with his numerous commissions, chiefly for jewellery; the hostility and treachery of certain Venetian artists; the friendship of Bellini; the pictures which he has in hand; and his own clothes, in which he took a deep interest. With reference to Pirkheimer, he writes chaffingly of Pirkheimer's habits and love-affairs. It appears from them that it was with Pirkheimer's help that he came to Italy, and that Pirkheimer had promised to look after his wife and mother.

In the following extracts from his letters to Pirkheimer, some information can be gleaned concerning his domestic life. On January 6, 1506,

he writes: "All the money I hope, if God will, to put by, as with it I will pay you, for I think I need not so soon send any money either to my mother or to my wife. I left ten florins with my mother when I rode away; she has also taken nine or ten florins for art wares; then Dratzieher has paid her twelve florins, and I have sent her nine florins by Sebastian Imhoff. Out of that she has to pay the Pfinzings and Gärtner seven florins for their rent. I gave my wife twelve florins, and she took thirteen at Frankfurt—that makes twenty-five florins, so I think she is in no need. But if she wants anything my brother-in-law must help her till I come home, and then I will honourably repay him." Again, on April 2: "Now on behalf of my brother [Hans], do speak to my mother, that she may have a talk with Wolgemut, as to whether he can give him work until I come back, or help him to get it with others. I would gladly have taken him with me to Venice, which would have been of use to both of us, and besides he would have been able to learn the language. But she was afraid that the sky would tumble in upon him. I beg you to look after him yourself, because it is a waste of time to trust women. Have a talk with the boy, as you can do so well, and tell him to be studious and steady until I come, and not to be a trouble to his mother, since although I cannot bring everything to pass, I will try and do my best. As for myself, I should be in no trouble, but to have to support so many is too hard for me; moreover, no one throws his money away." This letter affords a touching glimpse of the home in Nuremberg, with the old mother cherishing her Hans, the son of her declining years, and Dürer's struggle to support the three lives of mother, brother, and wife, all dependent on his earnings. On August 18 he writes: "Thank you for one thing, for explaining to my wife in the best way how I stand; for I know you are never lacking in wisdom. If you only had my meekness, you would have all the virtues." Finally, in October, he writes that he intends going to Bologna for eight or ten days, and then to return to Venice: "After that I shall come with the next messenger. How I shall freeze after this sun! Here, I am a gentleman; at home, only a parasite." In all these letters to Pirkheimer there is no trace of any affectionate epithet for his wife, but if his letters to her had been preserved they would no doubt tell a different story. What with the sale of his prints and the payment for the *Feast of the*

Rosary and other pictures, Dürer made money enough at Venice to pay off his debts to Pirkheimer and others. He then prepared to leave Venice. So much honoured was he now there that the Venetian Council actually offered him a sinecure post with a good salary, if he would only take up a permanent residence in their city. The love of his home and native town, however, prevailed with Dürer, and early in 1507 he was back at Nuremberg, for—

> Bright and fierce and fickle is the south,
> And dark and true and tender is the north
>
> TENNYSON.

Dürer probably proceeded leisurely on his home journey across the Brenner Pass. He has left numerous records of places which he passed, either coming or going, laboriously executed and brightly coloured as before in gouache or body colour.

With his return to Nuremberg a new epoch commences in Dürer's life. He had gained the summit of his ambition—success as a painter. Commissions now came in for paintings. The Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, for whom Dürer had in 1504 painted *The Adoration of the Kings*, commanded a large picture, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints under King Sapor of Persia.* This subject may have been chosen by Dürer himself in consequence of the numerous opportunities for the treatment of the nude body, and he had already dealt with it in his first series of large folio woodcuts. The trouble taken by him in composing the picture is shown by the sketch in the Albertina collection at Vienna, which is a more pleasing composition than the finished picture now in the Imperial Gallery in the same city. The picture took Dürer a long time, and, as he says, cost him more in time and money than he received in payment for it. Before it was finished he received a commission from a rich merchant of Frankfurt to paint a picture of *The Assumption of the Virgin.* A somewhat acrimonious correspondence has been preserved between Dürer and Heller concerning this picture, the price to be paid for it, and the delays in completing it, which makes a jarring note in the peaceful tenour of Dürer's life. The letters give, however, an interesting insight into Dürer's method of work, and explain how difficult it would always have been for Dürer,

with his minute labour and care, to make any profit from paintings on such a large scale. "It brings me no gain," he writes to Heller, "and robs me of my time"; and, again, "of ordinary pictures I will in a year paint a pile which no one would believe it possible for one man to do in the time. But very careful nicety does not pay. So henceforth I shall stick to my engraving, and had I done so before I should to-day have been a richer man by 1,000 florins."

In spite of his determination not to paint such a picture, Dürer in the same year accepted a commission to paint a large picture of *The Trinity and All Saints* for Matthäus Landauer of Nuremberg. This picture, now at Vienna, is the most successful of all Dürer's paintings. In it, as in the other two large pictures, he introduced his own portrait, this time standing in the lower part of the picture in a landscape of serene and ideal beauty, suggestive of the scenery of the Lago di Garda.

While in Venice, Dürer made numerous drawings, which can be recognised by the paper which he used there. He continued his favourite studies in proportion, still trying to frame ideal bodies for Adam and Eve in their state of innocence before the Fall. In 1507 he painted two such figures, which greatly excel in beauty the engraving of 1504, and show the softening influence of the Venetian atmosphere.

It was on engraving, therefore, that Dürer still depended for the support of his household. He obtained in 1508 a privilege from the Nuremberg Town Council to prevent the sale of fraudulent copies of his prints. Soon after his return from Italy he executed two of his most important copperplate-engravings, the *St. Eustace* and *The Great Fortune*, or, more properly, *Nemesis*. The *St. Eustace* is one of the best known and most popular of Dürer's engravings. Every detail is most carefully wrought out in the figures and the landscape, both in the foreground and in the distance. In this engraving, however, a somewhat over-elaboration of detail produces a disturbance of the planes in the composition, resulting in apparent errors of perspective. The high castellated hill in the background is adapted from one of the gouache landscape studies made by Dürer in Italy, called by him *Ein Welsch Schloss*. The *Nemesis*—for this is certainly the title by which Dürer knew it himself—is one of Dürer's boldest conceptions on copper, though the effect is marred by

Group of Dogs. From the engraving of "St. Eustace," by A. Dürer.

the unpleasing and uncompromising truth with which the naked body of a German *Hausfrau* has been delineated. Apart from this defect, the minute engraving of the wings, and above all the marvellous landscape below, are among Dürer's highest achievements. The mountain valley, with the riverside village and high-roofed church on a hillock above, is obviously an Alpine scene from one of Dürer's travelling sketch-books. Some smaller copper-engravings appear also to have been executed about this date, such as *The Witch*, *The Three Genii Blowing Trumpets*, and Dürer also appears to have published for the first time an engraving of *St. George on Horseback*, the plate being dated 1505, but altered by Dürer himself to 1508. In 1508 also he engraved *The Crucifixion* (*Das Kreuz*, as he called it himself), one of his most finished works.

Finding no doubt that small prints were more marketable than large, Dürer now commenced a series of engravings on a smaller scale to illustrate the Passion of Jesus Christ. He had already shown his intense sympathy with this subject in a series of drawings made in 1504 (now in the Albertina collection), and known as *The Green Passion*, from the green paper on which they are drawn. It has been stated above that the greater part of the woodcuts of *The Great Passion* had probably been finished before he left Nuremberg. *The Passion* on copper is engraved in much the same manner as the *Adam and Eve* of 1504, but in this series Dürer surrenders his fondness for dexterous and audacious feats of draughtsmanship and chiaroscuro to the pathos and human interest of his subject. In all scenes from Christ's Passion which Dürer treated there is a sincerity and earnestness, as if the artist had lived himself through the sufferings and anguish which he delineates. Add to this the resemblance of the type of Christ to Dürer's own portrait, as in *The Veronica* of 1513, and the result is that whether Christ is lying prone or kneeling with outstretched arms in Gethsemane, standing shivering before Pilate or mocked by his enemies, or stooping to raise a lost soul from hell, it is always Dürer's own personality which adds a touch of human sympathy to the deep religious fervour of these engravings.

The Passion in copper was carried on for several years, and never seems to have been brought to a definite conclusion. Meanwhile Dürer resumed his labours in wood-engraving, and completed his *Life of Mary* and *The Great Passion.* The success of the earlier engravings of *The*

Passion in copper was probably the reason that he interrupted this series, in order to draw and superintend the execution of a similar series on wood, more rapid to complete, although running in this case to no less than thirty-six blocks. This series, which is generally known as *The Little Passion*, is perhaps the best known and most popular portion of Dürer's work. It remains, and probably will long remain, unsurpassed as a pictorial narration of the great tragedy of the Christian Faith.

The Man of Sorrows. Title-page to "The Small Passion," on wood, by A. Dürer.

Several of the original wood-blocks are preserved in the British Museum. In 1511 Dürer determined to publish his four series of wood-engravings in book form. He added a title to each of them, these four title-pages being among his most spirited work. Benedictus Chelidonius, a monk and a friend of Dürer, contributed an explanatory text in Latin verse to *The Life of Mary* and to the two *Passions*. The four books were issued as printed and published by Dürer himself, and *The Apocalypse* and *The*

Life of Mary conclude with a warning fulmination against all future pirates of the prints.

Impreſſum Nurnberge per Albertum Durer pictorem. Anno chriſtiano Milleſi mo quingenteſimo vndecimo.

Heus tu inſidiator: ac alieni laboris: & ingenij: ſurreptor: ne manus temerarias his noſtris operibus inicias. caue: Scias enim a glorioſiſſimo Romano rum imperatore. Maximiliano nobis cõceſſum eſſe: ne quis ſuppoſiticijs formis: has imagines imprimere: ſeu impreſſas per imperij limites vendere aude at: q; ſi per cõtemptum: ſeu auaricie cri men: ſec⁹ feceris: poſt bonorũ cõ fiſcatiõem: tibi maximum pe riculũ ſubeundum eſſe certiſſime ſcias.

Colophon to "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer.

During the progress of the two small *Passions* an important change had taken place in Dürer's life at Nuremberg. After his father's death he had inherited his father's house in the street under the Veste, sharing it, however, with his brother Andreas. On his return from Venice, when he wished to set up a regular printing-press for himself with a staff of apprentices and assistants, he found this house too small, so that he purchased in 1509 a large corner house in the Zistelgasse, near the Thiergärtner Thor, in which he spent the rest of his Nuremberg life, and which exists as the Dürerhaus to this day. Subsequently he bought out his brother's interest in their paternal home, a house which is also still in existence. It was in his new house that he printed and published his four immortal series of woodcuts. He had now become one of the leading citizens of Nuremberg, and in 1509 was appointed to the office of *Genannter des Rathes*. In this same year also Dürer seems to have been moved to dabble in verse. "I composed two lines," he says himself, "each with exactly the same number of syllables, and thought I had succeeded very well." And so he became a poet; but Pirkheimer laughed at him, and Spengler wrote jeeringly, with allusions to the cobbler and his last. However, Dürer continued writing rhymes, and in 1510 actually

The Coat of Arms, with a Cock. From an engraving by A. Dürer.

published three broadsides with verses of his own and a woodcut at the head of the page. These were *The Schoolmaster*, *Death and the Soldier*, and *The Seven Times of the Day*. Such broadsides or flysheets were a product peculiar to Nuremberg, Hans Folz, a popular poet, having printed his poems in this way as early as 1479, while, as is well known, it was in this way that Hans Sachs circulated his. But when it came to serious publication Dürer thought better of it, relinquished poetry himself, and had recourse to his friend Chelidonius.

By this time Dürer had gathered round him a set of young apprentices, some of whom also became artists of note: in engraving, Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham; Hans von Kulmbach in painting; Georg Pencz in both painting and engraving; and also Hans Leonhard Schäufelein, excellent both as painter and wood-engraver. That he employed various hands to cut his blocks is evident from the inequalities of execution in the *Little Passion* series. His principal wood-engraver however was one Hieronymus Andreæ, who was probably assisted by his wife Veronica, of whom Dürer has left a drawn portrait, now in the British Museum. He now turned his attention to the possibility of shortening the process of engraving, or making the art more picturesque with greater freedom of touch. The proof impressions which have been preserved of the *Hercules* and the *Adam and Eve* show that Dürer first sketched in the composition in open line, gradually completing the details, but leaving the principal figures to the last. These outlines are freely but strongly drawn, and point to the use of the graver rather than the needle. In 1510, whether he was influenced or not by a sight of the dry-point engravings by the "Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet," he began to experiment with dry point or needle himself. In this way he produced a small engraving, *St. Veronica*, which was so delicately engraved that very few impressions could ever have been printed from it, only two being known to exist at the present day. Then in 1512 he engraved a small print of *The Man of Sorrows*, and a larger one of *St. Jerome in Penitence*. In the latter Dürer discovered that by the use of the burr on the copper he could produce a rich and velvety effect. This however was only possible for a very few impressions, and the plate quickly became a wreck. The same may be said of a somewhat larger plate engraved in the same way, *The Holy Family by the Wall*. More important however was his

being the first to make use, perhaps the actual discoverer, of the art of etching with acid on metal. It is uncertain whether Dürer borrowed this art from the armourer, or whether it was not just the other way. Nuremberg had been for years the centre of the armourer's trade, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it was chiefly transferred, through the influence of the Emperor Maximilian, to Augsburg. It was at Augsburg that etching was first practised for the decoration of armour, but it does not appear that any armour is known to have been decorated in this way before 1520. The aquafortis may have been used by the armourer for more ordinary purposes, but there is nothing to show that any person practised etching for the purpose of pictorial engraving before Dürer. In 1515, perhaps in 1514, Dürer took plates of iron, instead of the usual copper, and worked with the help of the acid on them. The earliest probably is a group of figure studies, thrown casually together on the same plate, perhaps with no real significance as a composition, being nothing more than different experiments on the same plate in biting with the acid. One figure appears to be a portrait of his brother Andreas, done from a sketch made by Dürer in 1514. In 1515 he had attained more skill in the art, producing *The Man of Sorrows Seated* and *The Agony in the Garden*—a favourite subject with Dürer, who made many drawings of it—and in 1516 *The Rape of Proserpine*, as the subject seems to be, and *The Angels with the Sudarium.* His last work in pure etching was *The Great Cannon*, in which a large gun—the *Feldschlange* of Nuremberg—with the arms of Nuremberg upon it, is surveyed by a group of soldiers and orientals, the chief figure of the latter group being borrowed from a coloured drawing of three orientals (in the Malcolm collection), dated 1514. But Dürer by no means abandoned engraving on copper with the burin. On the contrary, he now discovered that, by blending the use of the burin with the dry point or with the acid, he could produce a fuller and at the same time tenderer effect upon the copper than he could by the use of the burin alone. Dürer in his letter to Heller describes the care and labour which he bestowed on every detail of his painting, so that it may readily be assumed that he lavished the same upon his engraving. All Dürer's prints after 1510 have in the best impressions a silvery gray tone, which is quite new in the history of engraving. This Dürer attained by first working on the

plate with the needle, and then strengthening the engraving bit by bit with the burin until the required effect was produced. In this way he produced the most beautiful of his renderings of *The Virgin and Child*, in every one of which the motive of homely motherly love is as conspicuous and as touching as in the *Madonna della Sedia* or the *Madonna della Casa Tempi* of Raphael. Chief among those may be reckoned *The Virgin with the Pear* of 1511, and *The Virgin Seated by a Wall* of 1514.

The year 1511 was a busy one in wood-engraving. In this year he published several well-known woodcuts—*The Adoration of the Kings* (a kind of supplemental plate to *The Life of Mary*), *The Vision of St. Gregory*, *The Holy Family with a Lute*, the large and fine woodcuts of *The Holy Trinity*, *St. Jerome in his Cell*, and others. In the last-named woodcut it is interesting to compare the treatment of the subject with the later and more famous engraving in 1514.

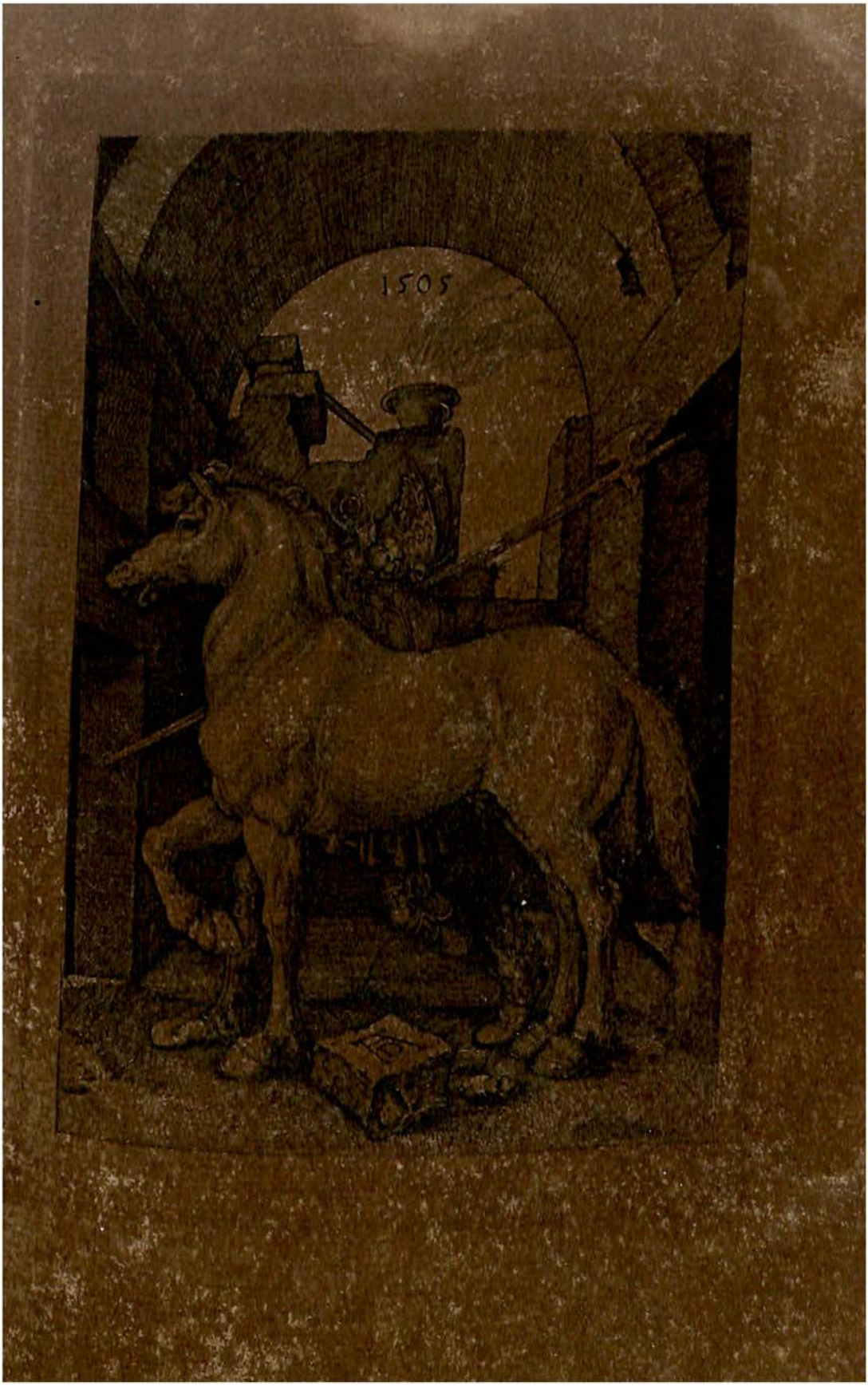
St. Jerome. Woodcut by A. Dürer.

CHAPTER IV

Dürer and his areams—The Knight, Death, and the Devil—St. Jerome—Melencolia—Maximilian—The Triumphal Arch—Maximilian's death—Journey to the Netherlands—Return to Nuremberg.

THE time had now come for the production of Dürer's three most famous, most imaginative, and best engraved compositions. His genius had now attained its full maturity, his intellect and his idiosyncrasies were most fully developed. In the dedication of a translation of one of Lucian's Dialogues by Pirkheimer to Dürer's friend Ulrich Varnbuler, of whom Dürer has left so remarkable a woodcut portrait, Pirkheimer speaks of Dürer's dreamy and abstracted nature. He says that as in Lucian's dialogue Adimantes leaves his friends and wanders down to the Piræus, where he, while gazing on a richly laden merchantship, becomes absorbed in dreams of future richness, so did Dürer once behave in the company of friends at Pirkheimer's house. While they were all amusing themselves in watching a troop of mercenaries march by in armour with a band of music, Dürer sat in a kind of trance, and afterwards confided to Pirkheimer that he had seen, in his imagination, such beautiful things that he would have been one of the happiest of mortals if he had been able to achieve them. Dürer has himself recorded some of his dreams, and, as has been mentioned above, as he drew his studies of men and horses, the figures grew and composed themselves into some fantastic scene which probably existed but for a few fleeting moments in Dürer's brain. Looking through the whole history of German art, the student will find no instance in Germany of this dreamy poetic nature in any other artist. Power, learning, industry, truth, a true worship of the beautiful, a fervent spirit of religion, these are to be found often in the works of German artists. Beauty, that quality which not

CHAPTER IV


1505

only attracts the eye and stirs the heart, but also affects and informs the intellect, was ever a "Fata Morgana" to the art of Germany, perceived, ardently pursued, but always evading the ultimate capture. How true is Goethe's description of the Pursuit of Beauty by Faust! The philosopher, learned and saturated with mediæval lore, has still one unappeased desire, the Beautiful. Religion, love, power, all fail to bring this within his reach. When, by supernatural means, he moves in a world of dreams and elemental mysteries, and when he has for once grasped Ideal Beauty in the person of Helen, what is the result? Euphorion is born, child of Classic Beauty and Mediæval Romance:—

Blumenstreifige Gewande
Hat er würdig angethan
Quasten schwanken von den Armen, Binden flattern um der Busen,
In der Hand die goldne Leier, völlig wie ein kleiner Phöbus,
Tritt er wohlgemuth zur Kante, zu dem Ueberhang; wir staunen,
Und die Eltern vor Entzücken werfen wechselnd sich ans Herz
Denn wie leuchtet's ihm zu Häupten? Was erglänzt ist schwer zu sagen,
Ist es Goldschmuck, ist es Flamme übermächt'ger Geisteskraft.

But this child, the "future master of all beauty," beautiful and agile as he is, in a moment vanishes into the air, while the embroidered garment, mantle, and lyre fall masterless to the ground.

Dürer alone among German artists came near to a vision of the Beautiful, and where he was unable to express it himself he still retained the power of communicating his conception to other minds. He is a curious phenomenon in busy mercantile Nuremberg, this dreamy artist-student. His peculiar qualities were no doubt due to his Hungarian descent. From Hungary has come much of what is most human and sympathetic in German art and music. The best and purest music may be produced from Germany itself, but it is from Hungary that the music comes which sends a throb through the hearts of all who hear it. While Dürer was thus dreaming over the problems of knowledge and difficulties of life, there came a stern reality into his life in the shape of Death, who in 1514 knocked at the door of Dürer's house, where his poor old mother had lain sick and dying for a year, and, in Dürer's own words, "smote her two great strokes to the heart." Sorrowing for his mother's sickness, but intent on leading a pure and unperturbed life

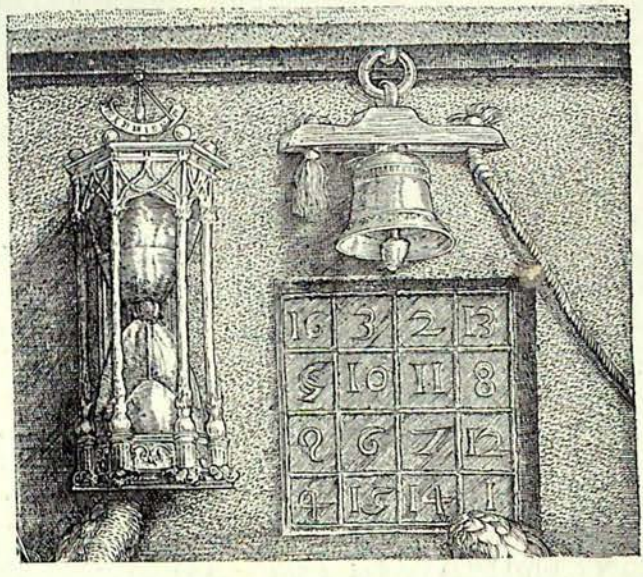
among temptations and difficulties, ever absorbed in and discovering something new in his own work and studies, and yet at the same time sensible of the impossibility of achieving anything permanent in the way of knowledge or art within the limits of a single life, Dürer produced from his brain the three world-famous engravings, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, *St. Jerome in his Library*, and *Melencolia*, which contain the philosophy of a lifetime, and are more eloquent than a thousand volumes of printed knowledge.

The panoply of war was familiar to all Germans of Dürer's date, especially since Maximilian had flooded Germany with his lanzknechts. War was ever stalking through the land with its cannons and *condottieri*. Dürer had already in 1498 made a drawing of a knight on horseback (now in the Albertina collection), clad, as he has written on the drawing, in the armour of the day. From his youth up he had studied the proportions of the horse as keenly as those of the human figure, as in *The Great Horse* and *The Little White Horse*, the *St. Eustace*, and other engravings. He had already used his drawing for the small engraving of *St. George on Horseback* in 1505. The type of the stern resolute *condottiere* may have been suggested to him by Verrocchio's statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni at Venice, and was embodied by him in the portraits of his two friends the Baumgärtner brothers in the altarpiece at Munich. Death also he had looked in the face from his boyhood as the omnipresent enemy of the human race, and he felt ever conscious of the demons of evil surrounding the path of life for every traveller thereon. Thus in 1513, the year of his sorrow, he combined these elements in his immortal conception of *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, which he himself described as *Der Ritter*. The engraving shows the Christian, clad in the armour of faith and courage, riding to his goal, conscious of, but undisturbed by, the menace of death or the horrible suggestions of the devil. In the words of an old German poem: —

> Across my path though Hell should stride,
> Through Death and Devil I will ride.

The second of these three engravings, published in 1514, shows a happier temperament. St. Jerome, the type of the mediæval scholar, who by his translation of the Bible into Latin became one of the real fathers of Christianity, sits at his writing-desk in his library, as he does

in the earlier woodcut by Dürer in 1511. The room is a regular German interior, such as that of Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, and the warm morning sun streams through the windows, over the saint, and the floor, where the lion and a dog lie slumbering in its warmth. All is peace, happiness, and contentment, and simplicity and comfort are blended in the fittings of the chamber. A strong contrast to this is shown in the *Melencolia* of the same year. The blow had fallen, and his mother was no longer alive. In this engraving all is dark and gloomy. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," dreams Melancholy. "What use are wings, what



Portion of Dürer's "Melencolia."

worth the crown of bays, what avails it to build, to measure, to level, to weigh, to solve problems of mathematics, alchemy, or philosophy, when the only end is nothing? Night and eternal sleep is all that mankind has to look forward to in this life." The rainbow is the only note of hope in the composition, while the comet seems to denote the existence of another world beyond human comprehension.

In the *Melencolia* there can be no doubt that the so-called "magic square" refers directly to the death of his mother. His mother died on May 17, 1514. Now the figures on the square can be read as follows: the two figures in the opposite corners to each other, 16+1 and 13+4,

make 17, the day of the month; so do the figures in the centre, read crossways, 10+7 and 11+6, and also the middle figures at the sides, read across, 5+12 and 8+9. The two middle figures in the top line, 3+2, give 5, the month in question; and the two middle figures in the bottom line give the year, 1514.[1] Above the square a bell tolls the fatal knell, and the sandglass timepiece hard by records no doubt the hour at which the sad event happened.

Dürer in his writings dwells so much upon the dominating influence of the Four Temperaments in life, that there is good ground for believing that these three engravings were part of a series intended to represent the Sanguine, Melancholic, Phlegmatic, and Choleric Temperaments. Dürer, however, makes no allusion to any such intention thereof. That there was a lighter side, however, to Dürer's life and thoughts is shown by the two little popular engravings of *The Bagpiper* and *The Dancing Peasants*, both published in 1514.

Meanwhile a new sphere of action had been opened to Dürer, fraught with hopes of riches and glory, but which turned out in reality to be the shoal on which Dürer's whole career was eventually wrecked. In February 1512 the Emperor Maximilian came to Nuremberg. Maximilian is one of the most curious and interesting figures of his time, in his way a personification of the Renaissance. Steeped in mediævalism and romance, the lusty vigour of his character led him to become one of the pioneers of a new age. His ambition was to excel in every walk of life. As sovereign, general, athlete, scholar, law-giver, churchman, man of letters, in everything he saw himself the first. He even aspired to the Papacy, as a fitting close to his career. When he was not careering over Europe in some of his innumerable wars, he was engaged in encouraging tournaments and pageants, or in patronising art and literature. The genial warmth of his encouragement made them grow apace. One thing, however, accompanied him during the whole of his career—namely, want of cash. "Why trouble yourself," may have said this knight of the jocund countenance, "about money, when you have rich bankers like the Fuggers of Augsburg or the Imhoffs at Nuremberg, ready and willing to be bled?" So progressed Maximilian in a blaze of triumph, commanding this and commissioning that, and trusting to the fact of all

[1] C. von Lützow, *Geschichte der deutschen Kupferstiches und Holzschnittes* (1891), p. 108.

reckonings being submerged in the deluge, which he knew must follow upon his removal from the scene.

Maximilian, Emperor of Germany. From a woodcut portrait by A. Dürer (reduced).

Struck by the achievements of Dürer in wood-engraving, Maximilian at once considered how the art could be turned to his own glorification.

He conceived in his mind a colossal woodcut picture, representing himself in a triumphal procession riding in a chariot towards a triumphal arch, on which all his achievements were depicted. He ordered Stabius, his professor of astronomy and mathematics, to confer with Dürer, and produce the literary part of these vast compositions. For two years Dürer worked on these designs for Maximilian, receiving no payment, being put off by Maximilian with an order to the Town Council at Nuremberg to exempt Dürer from taxation, an order to which the Council paid not the slightest attention. Ninety-two blocks did Dürer design for *The Triumphal Arch*, the biggest and in some ways the finest thing ever produced in engraving. Had this *Triumphal Arch* or *Gate of Honour* been the only engraved work of Dürer's which survived, it would still have won for him a place among the great artists of the world. The design is fantastic, but original. There are three openings in the arch—"The Gate of Honour and Might," "The Gate of Fame," "The Gate of Nobility." In the centre is the family tree of Maximilian, and on either side the principal historical events of his career and his achievements in the civil arts. It is nearly all drawn by Dürer from the descriptive designs of Joannes Stabius, but it seems that Hans Dürer and Hans Springinklee had some share in its composition. After its completion Dürer claimed his reward, the yearly pension of 100 florins promised by Maximilian. Maximilian acceded to this, by giving him a charge for this sum on the taxes of Nuremberg, though he did not scruple later on to assign all these taxes to the Elector of Saxony for some years. Dürer, however, had a truer friend in Frederick the Wise than in the jocund Emperor, so generous at other people's expense.

Many other designs did Dürer make for Maximilian, including twenty-four blocks for *The Triumph*, *The Triumphal Car* (not completed till after Maximilian's death), the patron saints of Austria, the ornamental borders to the famous *Book of Prayers*, the wonderfully minute little *Crucifixion* for Maximilian's sword-hilt, designs for a rich suit of armour, &c. Moreover, he drew on the wood for Stabius some of the latter's astronomical and geographical tables. When Maximilian presided at the Diet held at Augsburg in 1518, Albrecht Dürer, Caspar Nützel, and Lazarus Spengler were the commissioners sent by the town

of Nuremberg. There Dürer drew Maximilian's portrait from the life, "in his little room upstairs in the palace, in the year 1518, on the Monday after St. John the Baptist's Day." This drawing Dürer copied on wood, and afterwards, after the Emperor's death, inserted the block in an elaborate frame as a posthumous memorial. At Augsburg also during this Diet Dürer drew the portrait of the young Charles, Maximilian's grandson, already installed in the kingdom of Spain, but now for the first time invested with the imperial dignity. From this drawing a very rare woodcut was made, known chiefly by the numerous copies made of it at Augsburg by Jost de Negker and others.

Thus did Dürer's art grow and wax fruitful in the sun of the imperial favour, but his difficulties in extracting any remuneration from the Emperor are shown in the following letter, written about 1515: "Dear Herr Kress,—The first thing I have to ask you is to find out from Herr Stabius whether he has done anything in my business with his Imperial Majesty, and how it stands. Let me know this in the next letter which you write to my Lords. Should it happen that Herr Stabius has made no move in the matter, finding that the attainment of my ends was too hard for him, in that case I beg you, as my gracious master, to make such representations to his Imperial Majesty as Caspar Nützel explained to you, and as I asked you. Point out in particular to his Imperial Majesty that I have served his Majesty for three years, spending my own money in so doing, and if I had not been diligent the ornamental work would have been nowise so successfully finished. I therefore pray his Imperial Majesty to recompense me with the 100 florins—all which you know well how to do. You must know also that I made many other drawings for his Majesty besides *The Triumph*. If, however, you find that Stabius has accomplished anything for me, there is no need for you to take any trouble about me this time." If payment was slow in coming, it seemed certain to arrive in due time, when on January 12, 1519, an incautious meal of melon suddenly put an end to the jocund Maximilian's wars, feastings, tournaments, artistic schemes—to everything except his debts.

Dürer had just obtained from the Emperor a grant of 200 florins, chargeable on the Town Council of Nuremberg, in addition to his annual pension of 100 florins. This the Council declined to pay without

ratification. Hearing, therefore, that the new Emperor, the young Charles V., Maximilian's grandson, was going to the Netherlands to assume the sovereignty inherited from his mother, and was also going to be crowned as Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle, Dürer made up his mind to go in person and try and obtain from the Emperor himself a ratification of Maximilian's grant. Charles V. (already King of Spain) was elected Emperor at Frankfurt on June 28, 1519, and the Nuremberg Council determined to strike a medal to commemorate the occasion. Dürer sent in a sketch from which the medals were eventually made.

On July 12, 1520, Albrecht Dürer, with his wife Agnes and her maid Susanna, left Nuremberg and set forth on their journey to the Netherlands. Their departure may have been accelerated by a serious outbreak of the plague at Nuremberg, which may also have been the cause of Dürer being accompanied by his wife and maid, instead of journeying alone, as on his last visit to Venice. The party can be followed as they went by Erlangen, Baiersdorf, and Forchheim to Bamberg, where they were entertained by the Bishop; thence by degrees to Würzburg. From thence the journey was by Lohr and Aschaffenburg to Frankfurt along the valley of the Main, much the same route on which modern pilgrims are whirled by the railroad from their Mecca at Bayreuth. At Frankfurt they encountered Jakob Heller, Dürer's former patron and correspondent. Thence to Mayence, where they took passage on the Rhine on a boat bound for Cologne. Ten days it had taken them to get from Nuremberg to the Rhine, and the best part of three more before they arrived at Cologne. Here Dürer met his cousin Niklas the Hungarian, son of his father's brother Ladislas. They were quickly off from Cologne on the road to Antwerp, which city they reached on Thursday, August 2. Great was the honour paid to Dürer by the painters at Antwerp. They entertained him, his wife, and also the maid Susanna, at dinner in the hall of their guild, all their wives being present. Among other persons, Dürer met at Antwerp Quentin Matsys, Joachim Patenir,

The Crucifixion. From an engraving by A. Dürer, executed for the sword-hilt of the Emperor Maximilian.

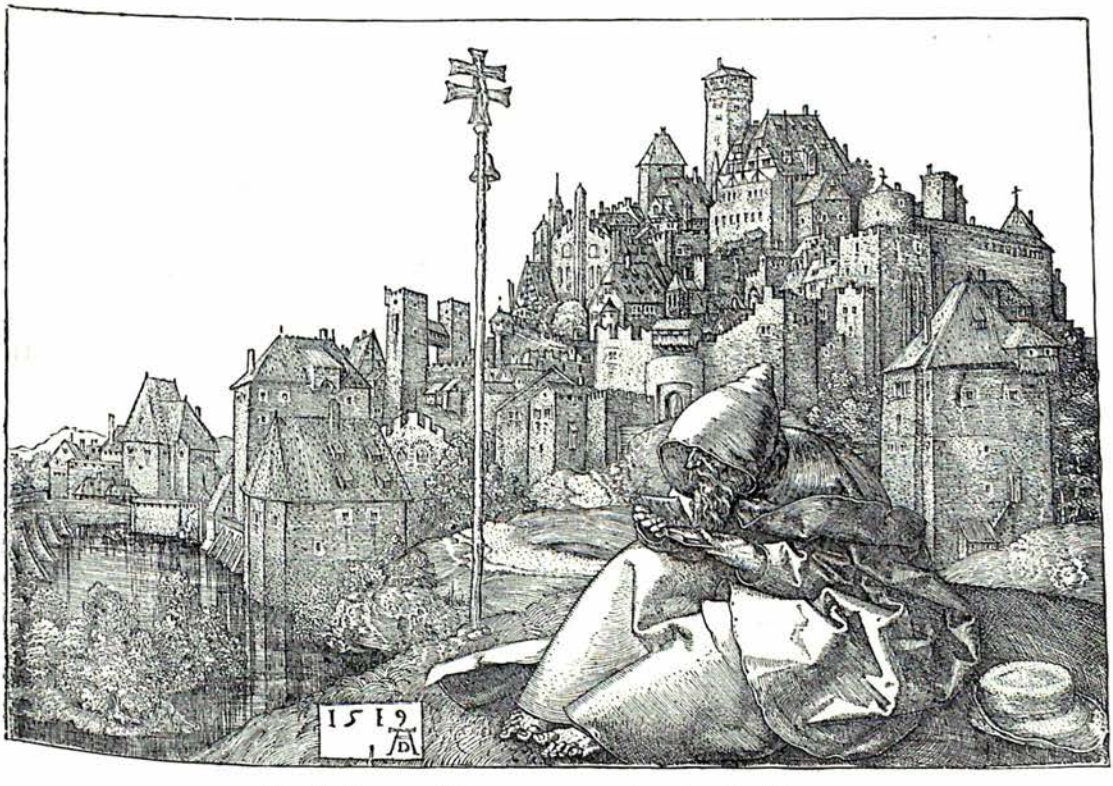
Erasmus, Nicolas Kratzer (Henry VIII.'s astronomer, so well known from his portrait by Holbein), and Peter Aegidius, the friend and correspondent of Sir Thomas More. He witnessed the Ommegang with the procession of all the guilds at the Feast of the Assumption. On August 26 Dürer left Antwerp, leaving his wife there, and travelled by Mechlin to Brussels, where he was presented to the Regent Margaret. Here at Brussels Dürer met Bernard van Orley, the painter, and drew his portrait, and also was much thrown with Erasmus. Dürer returned to Antwerp on September 3. Here he received the news of Raphael's death on April 6 of the same year, from the mouth of one of Raphael's pupils, Tommaso Vincidore of Bologna, who drew a portrait of Dürer, which has been engraved. On October 4 Dürer's party left Antwerp to go to Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), where the new Emperor was going to be crowned in the cathedral of Charlemagne, and where Dürer hoped to get an audience of the Emperor himself. They attended the coronation on October 23, and on the 26th paid a second visit to his cousin at Cologne, where they stayed till November 14, when they started on their return journey to Antwerp. This time they accomplished the journey by the Rhine boat, passing Düsseldorf, Nijmwegen, and Hertogenbosch, and reaching Antwerp on November 22. Here Dürer heard that a great whale had been stranded at Zierikzee on the coast of Holland, and he determined to try and get a sight of it. So on December 3 he started on horseback with his wife for Bergen-op-Zoom, and thence took boat for Arnemuyden, where Dürer was nearly shipwrecked while landing, and afterwards for Middelburg. On December 9 they started for Zierikzee, but the sea had washed away the whale before they got there, so back they came to Bergen, and home to Antwerp on December 14. Dürer now remained nearly four months at Antwerp, till April 6, when he paid a five days' visit to Bruges and Ghent. He then remained at Antwerp, with the exception of a short visit to the Lady Margaret at Mechlin, till July 3, when he started on his homeward journey by Brussels and Cologne. At Mechlin Dürer came across traces of his old friend Jacopo dei Barbari. "On Friday," he writes, "Lady Margaret showed me all her beautiful things; amongst them I saw about forty small oil pictures, the like of which for precision and excellence I have never beheld. There also I saw good works by Jan [van Mabuse] and Jakob Walch [Barbari]. I asked

my Lady for Jakob's little book, but she said she had already promised it to her painter [Bernard van Orley]." About this time Dürer records a meeting of the greatest interest. "Master Lukas, who engraves on copper, asked me as his guest. He is a little man, born at Leyden in Holland; he was at Antwerp;" and again, "I have drawn with the metal point the portrait of Master Lukas van Leyden."

Lucas van Leyden was Dürer's greatest contemporary rival in engraving north of the Alps. He was a little man with a little mind, but a great artist. His precocity was most remarkable, and his productive energy in painting and engraving quickly exhausted a weak constitution and brought him to an early grave. His engravings are very lightly executed and gave but few good impressions, so that really fine impressions of Lucas's engravings are rarer than those of Dürer's. He lacked Dürer's precision in drawing, and was totally deficient in Dürer's sentiment and imagination. He had however a breadth of design and a mastery of aërial perspective which is often lacking in Dürer's work. Dürer evidently appreciated his work, for he writes that he gave eight florins' worth of his own prints for a whole set of Lucas's engravings. It is obvious that Lucas knew Dürer's work, and worked in direct rivalry of it, as he did in his later days of Marcantonio.

Valuable information can be gleaned from Dürer's journal concerning his own prints and what he sold or gave to his friends. It appears from these entries that he divided his engravings roughly into three classes: whole-sheets, half-sheets, and quarter-sheets—for example, the *St. Eustace*, the *St. Anthony*, and the quite small prints. He took with him his most recently published engravings, his "four new pieces" being the two new *Marys* of 1520, *The Virgin Crowned by an Angel*, and *The Virgin with the Infant in Swaddling Clothes*, the *St. Anthony* (the famous little plate of 1519, with the wondrous view of Nuremberg in the background), and the *New Peasants* (a group also dated 1519). He most frequently gives or sells the "Three Large Books," *i.e. The Apocalypse*, *The Life of Mary*, and *The Great Passion*, or *The Little Passion*, and *The Passion* engraved on copper. He also mentions the *Adam and Eve*, the *St. Jerome in a Cell*, *Melencolia*, *The Knight*, *St. Eustace*, *Nemesis*, the *Meerwunder*, and the *Hercules*, the *Veronica*, *The Nativity* (or *Christmas*), and *The Cross*. In one place he alludes to what he calls his

"bad woodcuts," and he gives Augustin Lombard "the two parts of the *Imagines Cœli*, and to Master Dietrich the painter, the *Six Knots*." On Monday after Michaelmas 1520, he writes, "I gave Thomas of Bologna a whole set of prints to send for me to Rome to another painter, who should send me Raphael's work in return." On July 3 he says, "I gave the King of Denmark the best of all my prints; they are worth five florins." This unrivalled selection is still at Copenhagen. What would it be worth now? Shortly after attending the coronation of Charles V.



St. Anthony. From an engraving by A. Dürer.

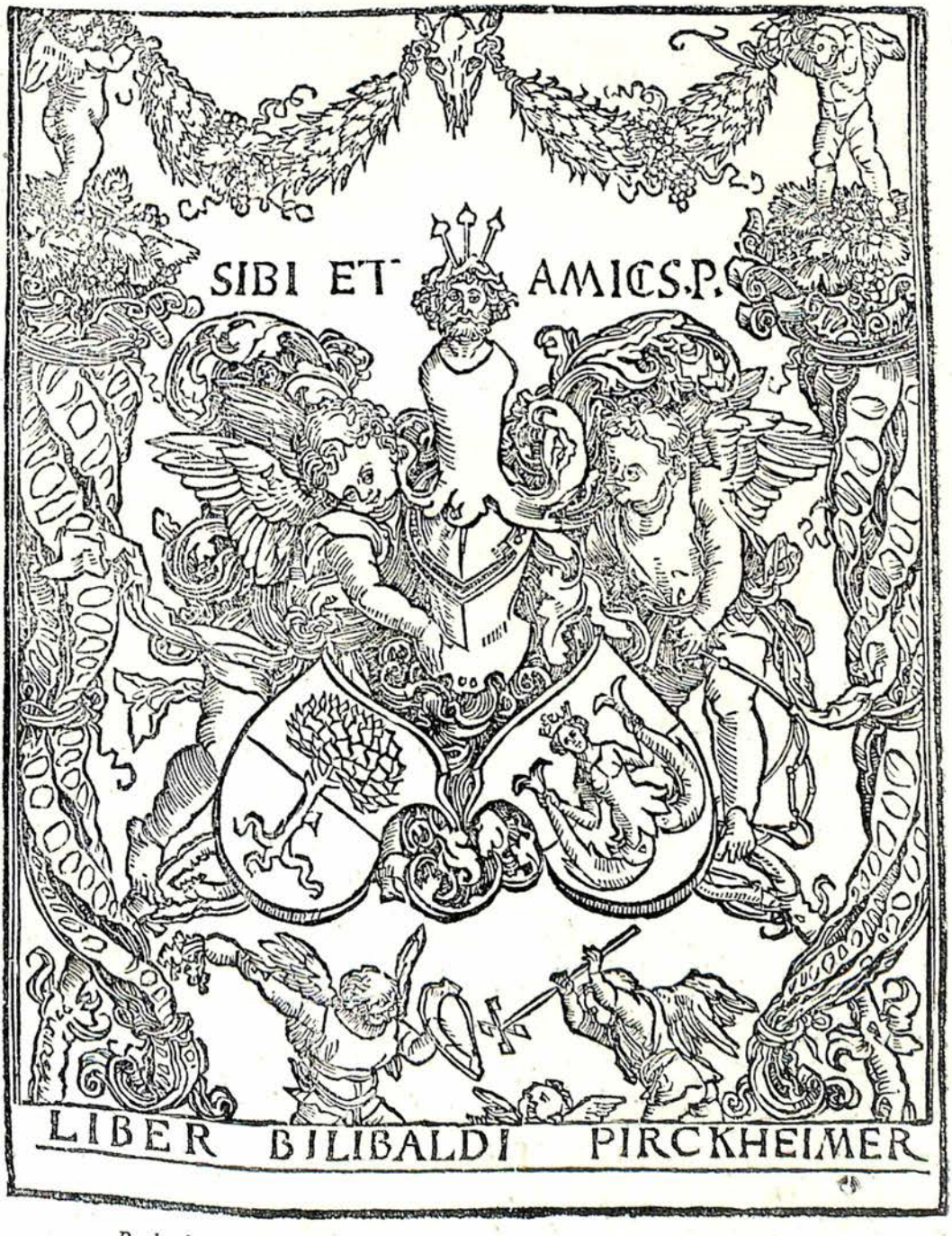
he succeeded in accomplishing the object of his journey. "My confirmation," he writes, "from the Emperor came to my Lords of Nuremberg for me on Monday after Martinmas in the year 1520, after great trouble and labour." On July 12, 1521, exactly a year after their departure from Nuremberg, Dürer and his wife started for Brussels on their journey home. As at Venice, the Town Council of Antwerp offered him a residence, a salary, and immunity from taxation, if he would remain there; but Dürer's love of his home proved invincible.

CHAPTER V

Result of journey—Ill health—Later engravings—Religious views—Luther—Waning powers—Engraved portraits—Melanchthon—The Four Temperaments—Literary works—Illness and death—Dürer's ideas of beauty—His importance as a black-and-white artist.

ALTHOUGH Dürer succeeded in the chief object of his journey, he was not at all contented with the profits got by the sale of his own wares. "The Lady Margaret especially," he writes, "gave me nothing for what I had presented to her or made for her." Ill-health, too, he brought home with him to Nuremberg. During his expedition to Zeeland he had been attacked by an extraordinary sickness which he could never quite shake off. After his return to Antwerp he was in April seized with great weakness, nausea, and headache, and had to have resort to medical advice. This illness seems to have seriously impaired not only his physical health but his creative faculties, and seems to have been intermittent. When, however, he returned to Nuremberg and to his house by the Thiergärtner Thor, he was treated with increased respect by his fellow-citizens. Hitherto the Councillors of Nuremberg had not shown themselves of a very liberal or generous disposition. All the commissions which Dürer had as yet received were from princes or private individuals. Now in 1521 the Council decreed that the Rathhaus at Nuremberg should have its large hall painted after designs by Dürer, those chosen being the *Calumny of Apelles* and *The Triumphal Car of Maximilian*, as it is seen in the great woodcut of 1522. Dürer's industry as an engraver now flagged. Two unimportant engravings of *St. Christopher* were done soon after his return. He seems to have contemplated another Passion series on wood in an oblong shape, completing some of the drawings and one woodcut, *The Last Supper*, dated 1523. He also seems to have intended a series of the Apostles, which he commenced in

1514 with *St. Thomas* and *St. Paul*, to which he now added *St. Bartholomew* and *St. Simon* in 1523, and later on, in 1526, *St. Philip*.



Book-plate of Willibald Pirkheimer. From a wooacut by A. Dürer.

He frequently drew coats-of-arms, book-plates (*ex libris*), or sometimes title-pages for his friends; but his creative powers seem to have lapsed.

As Dürer advanced in life he became more and more absorbed in the progress of the Lutheran doctrines. He showed his hatred of sacerdotalism and lay oppression as far back as *The Apocalypse*, but he gradually began to take a deeper personal interest in the doings and writings of Luther, Melanchthon, and Ulrich Zwinglius. Unfailing faith in the benevolence and mercy of God seems to have been the kernel of Dürer's religious views, as they are of many an upright and industrious German household at the present day. After his father's death in 1502, Dürer wrote to a friend asking for their prayers on behalf of his father's soul, and says that it is not possible for one who has lived well to depart ill from this world, for God is full of compassion. Again he says, in defence of his art, "that what God had formed is good, whatever wrong use men may make of it." Now that sickness had struck a warning note in his life, his mind turned to the contemplation of another world. The three great engravings, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, *Melencolia*, and *St. Jerome*, were the results of his brooding over the trials and the shortness of life. A true Humanist, Dürer carried out the old Latin adage—

Homo sum; nihil humani a me alienum puto,

and trusted implicitly that by leading an upright and industrious life he would be rewarded by God in a future life. Thus the simple, downright honesty of Luther was in easy consonance with his own thoughts. To Dürer, as well as to Luther, one page of the sacred book itself was worth all the learning of the Fathers, one simple good action to another fellow-creature would be more efficient to secure future bliss than a thousand indulgences bought by gold and the repeating of venal supplications.

It was in Antwerp that Dürer received the news of Luther's abduction near Eisenach, though he naturally was unaware that it was done by Luther's friends. Dürer felt that he was gone from them altogether, and writes a lament full of genuine pathos and sorrow. "All men," he writes in his journal, "who read Martin Luther's books can see how clear and lucid is his doctrine, because he sets forth the Holy Gospel. For this reason his books ought to be greatly revered and not burnt, unless indeed his enemies, who are always fighting against the truth, and would make men into gods, were also thrown into the fire, together with their opinions, and then a new edition of Luther scrolls prepared. Oh God,

if Luther be dead, who will henceforth expound to us the Holy Gospel with such clearness? What, oh God, might he not still have written for us in ten or twenty years!" Writing in 1520 to Georg Spalatin, chaplain to his former patron Frederick the Wise of Saxony, Dürer says: "And pray God that I may come to Doctor Martin Luther, for I will diligently draw his portrait and engrave it on copper for a long memorial of the Christ-like man who has helped me out of such great sorrows; and I beg your Honour, when Doctor Martin composes anything new in German, to send it to me at my expense."

Soon after Dürer's return from the Netherlands, Nuremberg was convulsed by religious troubles. Although the town was ready to embrace the reformed doctrines, it was in a peaceful and conservative spirit. The outbreak, however, of the Peasants' War brought great troubles into the town, for many of the younger and more turbulent spirits adopted the extreme doctrines of Münzer, and raised a tumult against the civil authority. In vain did Dürer and his friends lament these religious convulsions. Dürer's own best wood-engraver, Hieronymus Andreæ, was not only one of the ringleaders, but was actually thrown into prison, and three of his chief pupils and assistants in copperplate-engraving, Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham and Georg Pencz, were expelled from the town.

Ill-health, religious troubles, and the waning of his productive energy seem to have had a rather embittering effect on Dürer's nature.

Although he seems never to have been in want of money, he now began to show himself to be a true Nuremberger in the care which he took of his affairs, and he was egged on no doubt by his thrifty and unromantic wife Agnes. In 1524 he wrote a letter to the Town Council of Nuremberg, in which he alludes sarcastically to the little encouragement given him by his fellow-citizens. "During the thirty years I have stayed at home, I have not received from people in this town work worth 500 florins—and not a fifth part of that has been profit." He then says that he has saved 1,000 florins, which he asked them to receive for him, and to pay to him and his wife five per cent. interest. This the Town Council agreed to do, although after his death they reduced the rate of payment to his wife to four per cent.

Feeling his imaginative powers failing him, Dürer occupied his last

years in making portraits in painting as well as on wood and on copper When in Augsburg in 1518, he had met and made acquaintance with the art-loving and influential Albrecht of Brandenburg, Cardinal Archbishop of Mayence, and had drawn his portrait more than once. One of these drawings he had engraved in 1519 as a frontispiece to the *Heilthumsbuch*, published at Halle in 1520. He now engraved another portrait of the Cardinal, which he sent with 500 impressions. In a letter to the Cardinal, dated September 4, 1523, he inquires anxiously after this plate, sent, as he says, before he was ill that year. It is to be hoped that the good Cardinal did not, like Maximilian, leave his *protégé* unpaid. In 1524 Melanchthon came to Nuremberg and was the guest of Pirkheimer, in whose house Dürer frequently met him. Many seem to have been the discussions between the three friends—the artist, the reformer, and the gouty scholar. Melanchthon said of Dürer that in him the artistic element, prominent as it was, was by no means the most important. The last engravings from Dürer's hand were portraits of his friends among the supporters of the reformed religion. In 1524 he published that of his old patron Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, now grown old and corpulent, and very different from the strong fiery man depicted by Dürer in earlier years in the portrait now at Berlin. In the same year he published the portrait of his friend Pirkheimer, a marvel of engraving and a complete rendering of his features, in which one can read the impetuous and voluminous scholar and writer, the man fond of life, love, and feasting, and the querulous victim to gout and other ailments of advancing years. It has been shown how eagerly Dürer desired to engrave Luther's portrait. In 1526 he engraved that of Melanchthon, and also that of Erasmus, done from one of the drawings made by Dürer in the Netherlands. The last two are by no means the most satisfactory of Dürer's portraits, though as engravings they quite hold their own. The portrait of Erasmus is avowedly done from memory and from a drawing of a few years back. The world is so much accustomed to see Erasmus as Holbein painted him in his old age, that Dürer's portrait comes rather as a surprise, or even as a shock. Erasmus himself, on viewing the portrait, dismissed it with a sarcasm, and was evidently far from being flattered by it, although he acknowledged that he himself had altered much during the intervening years. Others among Dürer's friends and patrons.

whom he seems to have intended to immortalise on copper, were Eobanus Hesse, of whom a woodcut exists from a drawing by Dürer, Christian

Portrait of Albrecht Dürer. From a woodcut published after his death (reduced).

of Denmark, &c., but his work as a copperplate-engraver was now at an end.

Once more did painting monopolise his attention. He conceived the idea of four great figures, representing his favourite subject of the Four Temperaments, as represented by the Apostles Peter, John, Paul, and Mark. These he painted on two great upright panels, and presented to the Town Council of Nuremberg, though they have since found their way to Munich.

When Dürer's creative powers as an artist began to fail him, he set to work to put in order the numerous notes and studies he had made throughout his life on Measurement and Proportion. Among the scraps of manuscript which have been preserved is the following scheme for a *magnum opus* on the theory and practice of art :—

Ten things are contained in the little book :—
The first, the proportions of a young child.
The second, proportions of a grown man.
The third, proportions of a woman.
The fourth, proportions of a horse.
The fifth, something about architecture.
The sixth, about an apparatus through which it can be shown that all things may be traced.
The seventh, about light and shade.
The eighth, about colours ; how to paint like nature.
The ninth, about the composition of a picture.
The tenth, about free painting, which alone is made without any help from the understanding.

The result of his labours was that in 1525 he published a kind of preliminary work entitled *The Teaching of Measurements by Rule and Compass in Lines, Planes, and Solids*, compiled by Albrecht Dürer, and printed with illustrations for the use of all lovers of art, in the year 1525.[1] This was a work on geometry, and Dürer paid special attention to the illustrations, since, as he says in the text, "anything which you see is more credible than what you hear, and when both seen and heard it is easier to remember." He then took in hand the four books on *Human*

[1] Underweysung der Messung mit dem zirckel uñ richtscheyt in Linien ebnen unnd gantzen corporen durch Albrecht Dürer zusamen getzogē und zu Nutz allē kunstliebhabenden mit zugehörigen figuren in truck gebracht im Jar MDXXV.

Proportions, but in the meantime put forth in 1527 a treatise on *The Art of Fortification*.[1] He had only completed for the press one out of the four volumes of *Human Proportions* at the time of his death, but the work was seen through the press and completed by Pirkheimer in 1528.[2] His studies on the proportions of a horse remained incomplete and unpublished, and were eventually stolen or appropriated by Hieronymus Andreæ and Hans Sebald Beham, who would have published them for their own profit and credit, had not Dürer's widow obtained an injunction against them from the Town Council. Another work, intended to be called *A Banquet (or Dish) for Young Painters*, remains only in fragments. This work would seem however to have been completed, for Camerarius, in the eulogy of Dürer from which quotations have already been made, says that "if I find that my industry and devotion in this matter meet with my readers' approval, I shall be encouraged to translate into Latin the rest of Albrecht's treatise on painting, a work at once more finished and more laborious than the present. Moreover, his writings on other subjects will also be looked for, his Geometrics and Teichismatics, in which he explained the fortification of towns according to the system of the present day. These however appear to be all the subjects on which he wrote books. As to the promise which I hear certain persons are making, in conversation or in writing, to publish a book by Dürer on the symmetry of the parts of the horse, I cannot but wonder from what source they will obtain after his death what he never completed during his life. Although I am well aware that Albrecht had begun to investigate the law of truth in this matter too, and had made a certain number of measurements, I also know that he lost all he had done through the treachery of certain persons, by whose means it came about that the author's notes were stolen, so that he never cared to begin the work afresh. He had a suspicion, or rather a certainty, as to the source whence came the drones who had invaded his store, but the great man preferred to hide his knowledge to his own loss and pain rather than to lose sight of generosity

[1] Etliche underricht zu befestigung der Stett Schloss und flecken. . . . Gedrückt zu Nürenberg nach der Geburt Christi Anno MCCCCCXXVII in dem Monat October.

[2] Hjerin sind begriffen vier bücher von menschlicher Proportion durch Albrechten Dürer von Nürenberg erfunden und beschriben zu nutz allen denen, so zu diser kunst lieb tragen, MDXXVIIJ.

and kindness in the pursuit of his enemies. We shall not therefore suffer anything that may appear to be attributed to Albrecht's authorship, unworthy as it must evidently be of so great an artist."

Dürer's labours were terminated rather suddenly by his death, which occurred in Passion Week, on April 6, 1528. A woodcut portrait of him published after his death shows the extent to which he had been reduced by the ravages of disease. The face is worn and haggard, and the head has been shorn of those golden curls which were the glory of Dürer's portraits, and made him famous among his fellow-citizens. It is usually supposed that Dürer died of an inflammation of the spleen, brought on by the malarious fever which he incurred during his visit to Zeeland. A drawing at Bremen seems to support this, in which he has drawn himself pointing to a large yellow spot near the left groin, and inscribed "Where the yellow spot is to which my finger points, there it is that I feel pain." It has been suggested, however, to the present writer that the recorded symptoms of Dürer's illness point rather to the continuous presence of renal disease, and that he suffered for many years from the presence of a calculus or calculi in the left kidney. As far back as the year 1503 Dürer had been attacked by illness, during which he suffered great pain, as is shown by a drawing of Christ in agony as *The Man of Sorrows*, which is inscribed by Dürer, "This I drew during my sickness," and is evidently a record of his own suffering. The journey to the Netherlands, with its constant change of diet and mode of travelling, its feastings and wine-drinkings, and, finally, the long hurried ride and expedition by boat with the escape from shipwreck during the journey to Zeeland, would all have aggravated the existing ailment, and rendered him an easy victim to the malaria of the marshy coast. The fever, nausea, and headache from which Dürer subsequently suffered are all usual symptoms of the presence of such a disorder, and the sudden and peaceful passing away of a patient is, according to Dr. Norman Moore, a frequent occurrence in such cases. Many were the lamentations over his death. Those of Pirkheimer were loud and pathetic. Eobanus Hesse, one of the friends whose portraits Dürer drew, wrote an elegy on his death, which he sent to Luther, who replied in the touching words, that "Christ had taken him away in good time from those stormy days, which were destined to become more stormy still." Melanchthon added his voice to the chorus of

mourning. Erasmus alone was rather chilly in his reception of the news: perhaps he had not forgiven Dürer for the unflattering portrait mentioned before. Dürer was laid in the burying-place of the Frey family in the cemetery of St. John outside Nuremberg, where at a later date a monument was erected to mark the spot where his body had been laid. His widow and his chief assistant and wood-engraver, Hieronymus Andreæ, carried on the trade in his engravings for several years.

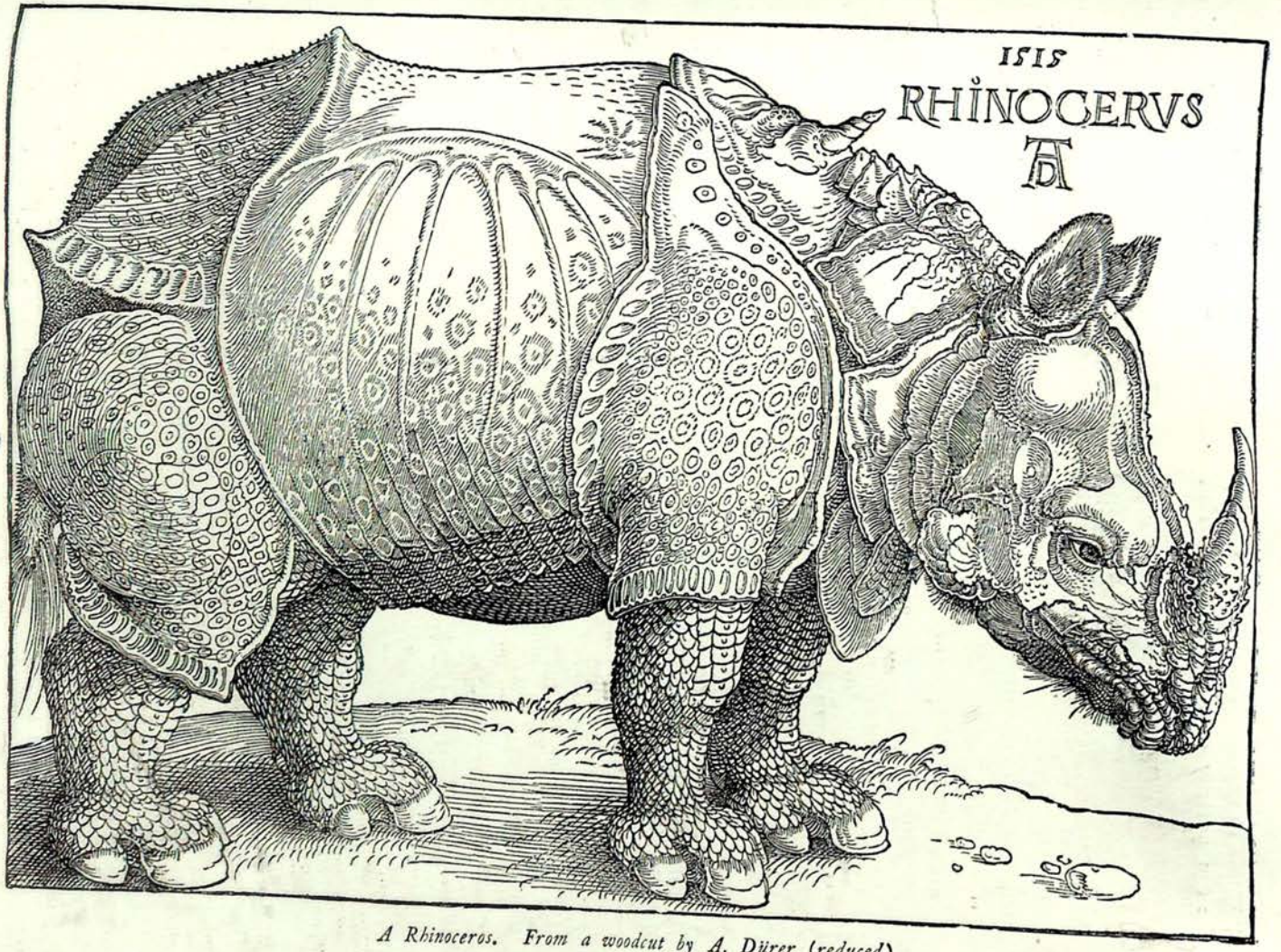
Hieronymus, as has been stated before, was concerned in the piratical abstraction of Dürer's notes on the proportion of the horse. It was probably at his advice, or under his direction, that a great number of woodcuts were published after Dürer's death bearing his well-known monogram, and many of them, no doubt, from drawings actually made by Dürer himself. In this branch of engraving it is sometimes difficult to separate the woodcuts published during Dürer's lifetime and under his superintendence from those furbished up by Hieronymus in the years immediately following Dürer's death. Many of those by Hans Schäufelein have been included among Dürer's works at a time when the tendency to pile on to the name of a great artist any work which could be said in the slightest degree to resemble his was as great as the present tendency among critics to eliminate any work which may seem to them of inferior value or inadequate execution in proportion to the estimate in which they hold the artist in question.

What is beauty? This was the question which Dürer asked himself daily throughout his life, and to which he could never find a satisfactory answer. "Utility is an element of Beauty," he says, "therefore what is useless in man is not beautiful. To judge of Beauty requires reflection. The standard of Beauty should, in my opinion, be like the standard of what is good." Such are some of Dürer's scattered thoughts upon the subject. His final opinion was that no man on earth can positively affirm what the perfection of human beauty is. No one but God knows that, and he to whom God may reveal it. In truth, and in truth alone, lies the secret of what constitutes beauty and perfection of shape in the human form. Truth, therefore, in Dürer's opinion is the nearest equivalent to beauty, and truth can only be acquired by close intellectual study with careful and accurate observation of nature. The æsthetic mind of the nineteenth century may be repelled by some of Dürer's most truthful

creations, especially in his delineations of the nude female figure. Dürer, however, went to nature for his studies of truth, and rejected all search of ideal beauty, feeling, no doubt, that it would be as futile and unsatisfying as that of Faust. Hence all his exquisite studies of natural objects. A stag-beetle, a hare, a plant of celandine, a dead jay, a marble quarry, a village nestling by a stream—to him are all as much imbued with beauty as the human form and countenance. Dreaming of beautiful things which he could not achieve, he depicted exactly what he did see in his waking hours; combining the somewhat *farouche* veracity of a Rembrandt with the imagination of a Watts and the minute accuracy of an Isaac Oliver.

As has been mentioned before, Dürer was a devoted student of natural history, especially of any object new or strange to him. A good instance of this is the well-known woodcut of a rhinoceros, done in 1515 from a drawing made by Dürer from the description sent him by a friend from Lisbon, where in 1513 a live rhinoceros had been brought from India. The original drawing of which this woodcut was made is in the British Museum, together with a similar drawing of a walrus, made also from description. It will be remembered that it was to try and see a whale that Dürer made his hurried and, as it proved, fatal journey into Zeeland.

It is as a black-and-white artist that Dürer has his chief claim on the reverence of posterity. He was the first great artist in this noble art, in which he was to be followed by Rembrandt, Hollar, Ostade, Meryon, Whistler, Haden, and a host of others. For the first time in history art was, in spite of the abnegation of colour, placed within the grasp and the intelligence of the people. Schongauer had led the way with his engravings; but it was Dürer, with his great woodcuts, who spoke and taught a new popular language. Erasmus writes of Dürer's woodcuts as follows: "Apelles, it is true, made use of few and unobtrusive colours; while Dürer, admirable as he is too in other respects, what can he not express with one single colour—that is to say, with black lines? He can give the effect of light and shade, brightness, foreground and background. Moreover, he reproduces not merely the natural look of a thing, but also observes the laws of perfect symmetry and harmony with regard to the position of it. He can also transfer, by enchantment, so to say, upon the canvas things which it seems not



A Rhinoceros. From a woodcut by A. Dürer (reduced).

possible to represent, such as fire, sunbeams, storms, lightning, and mist ; he can portray every passion, show us the whole soul of man shining

The Virgin crowned by two Angels. Engraving by A Dürer

through his outward form, nay, even make us hear his very speech. All this he brings so happily before the eye with those black lines that the picture would lose by being clothed in colour. Is it not more worth

admiration to achieve without the winning charm of colour what Apelles only realised with its assistance?"

In this short study of Albrecht Dürer's life and work it has not been possible to do more than recount the more salient events of his life, and note the development and importance of his work as an engraver. His countless drawings, executed in every size and method, must be passed over with the remark that it is in them that Dürer's chief excellence as an artist is to be found, and that a prolonged study of such collections as those in the print rooms at the British Museum and at Berlin, or in the Albertina collection at Vienna, cannot fail to instruct and inform the mind of any student, lay or professional. Of his numerous designs for ornament more cannot be said here than that they proved the foundation of a school at Nuremberg, it being the branch of engraving in which Dürer's pupils and successors, the little masters, particularly excelled. All the works of carving or sculpture which have been attributed to Dürer may be considered as doubtful; the once famous hone-stone carving of *The Birth of St. John the Baptist* being now known to be the work of a later Nuremberg artist. As a painter Dürer's works rank high, but not in the first class; as an engraver he is easily the first of his age, though some may think him to have been excelled in mere technical skill by Schongauer or Aldegrever; as a draughtsman he remains unrivalled for precision, dexterity, and variety; as a thinker he is a worthy representative of the age of Luther and Erasmus.

But it is not only as a mere creative artist that Dürer attained his eminence. He was one of the great pioneers of art. Before him, little or nothing had been done north of the Alps to make art a factor in popular life. There is probably no branch of the fine arts which has not been affected in some way or another by the fact of Dürer's existence. Of how many artists can it be said that they left an impress on the whole subsequent history of art, and that they remain beacon lights or milestones by which the course of true art can be followed with the certainty of arriving at some definite conclusion? Giotto, Luca Signorelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, Titian, Velazquez, Turner, Rembrandt, it is among these names that that of Dürer will rank for ever in the history of the world.

The minds of those who study Dürer's work should be open and

unbiassed. In that case there cannot but be conveyed to them the lesson which truth, purity, and sincerity of purpose are ever bound to teach. In the words of Camerarius, "There is nothing foul, nothing disgraceful in his work; the thoughts of his pure mind shunned all such things"; and again, "if there be anything in this man that at all resembled a fault, it was only his incessant diligence and the frequently unjust severity of his own self-criticism."

In bringing this monograph to a conclusion, the words may be quoted which Dürer wrote in 1512 among the many drafts for his book on proportion: "In this matter I will, with the help of God, set forth the little which I have learnt, though it will seem but a poor thing to many. But this does not trouble me, for I know well that it is easier to find fault with a thing than to make something better."

St. Jerome. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.

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PREFACE

THIS monograph is supplementary to one published in November 1894, and entitled "The Engravings of Albrecht Dürer." In neither case has it been the writer's intention to give a critical study of Dürer's work, a task, indeed, which would occupy a far greater space than these monographs allow. An appreciation or historical study of Dürer's work has rather been intended; and if this should lead any reader to a nearer acquaintance with one of the most instructive and companionable of artists, the writer's object will have been attained. In the following pages a certain amount of repetition from the preceding monograph has been unavoidable, but it has been used as sparingly as possible. The drawings selected for reproduction are from the collection in the British Museum.

ERRATA IN FORMER MONOGRAPH

On page 19, line 16, for *within* read *into.*

„ 49, „ 9, for *But* read *And.*

„ 64, footnote 1, reference was made in error to "Anton Springer, Albert Dürer, Berlin 1892." The reference should have been to C. von Lützow, Geschichte der deutschen Kupferstiches und Holzschnittes (1891), p. 108.

„ 74, line 19, for *nihil a* read *nihil humani a.*

Lucas Baumgärtner

THE PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

CHAPTER I

Introduction—German art in the Middle Ages—Influence of the Church—Rise of art at Nuremberg—Pleydenwurff and Wolgemut—Early Nuremberg school—Dürer apprenticed to Wolgemut—The "Schatzbehalter" and "Weltchronik."

In a former number of the *Portfolio* (November 1894) an attempt was made to lay before the reader a short sketch of the life of Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg, and to give a descriptive, and to some extent explanatory, account of his engravings on copper and on wood.

The limits of space contained in the volumes of this series made it necessary to confine the contents of the number in question to the engraved work of Albrecht Dürer, and to pass over, with little more than a mere allusion, that very large and important portion of his life-work which has survived to posterity in his paintings and drawings.

The engraved work of Albrecht Dürer is that which has appealed, and will probably continue to appeal, most strongly to the attention and sympathy of the art-student, especially in England. In the first place, it is accessible to everybody in every collection of engravings which has any pretensions to be complete; and in the second place it is capable of reproduction in these days in such exact facsimile that it is hardly

necessary for the student, who does not desire to be an expert, to have recourse to the originals. In these engravings moreover lie the strength and originality of Dürer's creative powers, and by them he has exercised so powerful and fascinating an influence on the world of art and letters.

It is a different matter with the paintings and drawings of Dürer. The number of paintings executed by him is very few, and they are scattered all over Europe. The genuine paintings from his brush which until recently existed in England could have been counted on the fingers of a single hand; and it is doubtful if at the present moment more than two genuine paintings by Dürer exist in these islands. In the print-room at the British Museum, and in a few private collections, there are drawings by him sufficient to illustrate all the various stages of his artistic career. Many of these too have, by modern skill and care, been reproduced in fairly good facsimile; but the student as well as the expert cannot but feel the necessity of examining the original drawings themselves, as no mechanical process can ever succeed in reproducing the quality and personality that is inherent in every stroke of the human hand.

It follows therefore that in England at all events the paintings and drawings of Dürer are less known, less appreciated, and certainly less understood than the more familiar engravings. It is the intention of the following pages to try and show the importance of Albrecht Dürer as a painter in the art-history not only of his own country but of the whole world.

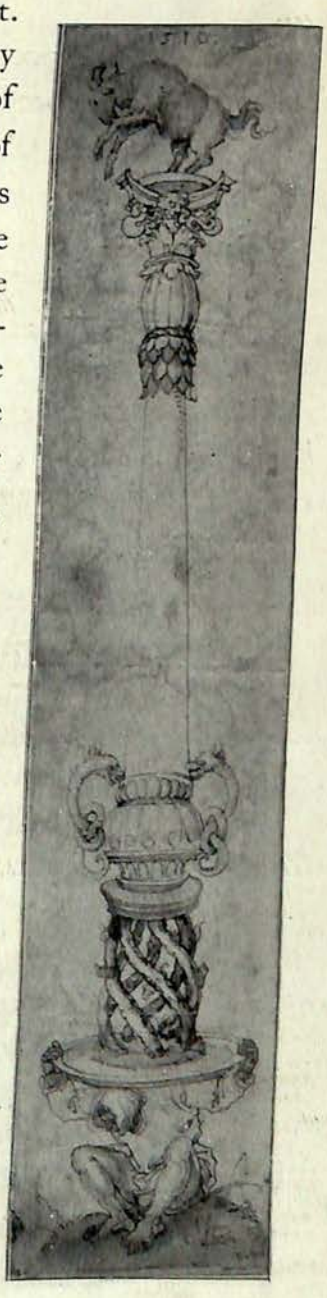
German art is but little understood by the British race. Educated and nurtured as the art-student is on the perfected canons of art, as fixed by the works of the great painters of Italy, the productions of artists north of the Alps jar upon the eyes and conflict with the preconceived emotions of those who for the first time direct their minds towards them. The beauty and significance of the paintings by the great Flemish artists, Van Eyck, Van der Weyden, Van der Goes, Gerard David, and others have for some time been established and vindicated in the domain of art. The works of German painters however still remain distasteful to the palate for the majority of students, although relished and valued by a

few. And yet the study of German art has its fascinations, and repays a hundredfold the time which may be devoted to it.

Germany has ever been, and is still, a country of craftsmen rather than artists. The works of German artists smack of the workshop and not of the open air. In a northern climate a man's life is spent as much indoors as under the sky. In the south a house is but a shelter from the heat of the sun, or from the violence of the storm,—a store-house of a man's family, goods, and chattels. Life is spent mainly in the open air; and the days are but few during which the warmth necessary for human life is not acquired directly from the sun. North of the Alps the house is the centre of life. The enemy to be guarded against is the cold, and the purveyor of warmth and comfort is, for the greater part of the year, the stove.

For the same reason, in the sunny south, through constant exercise in the open air, through the lightness of clothing required to protect the body, and through the moderateness of the diet necessary for the preservation of health, the human form attains its highest perfection and beauty. The basis of Greek art is "the human form divine," and the same may be said of the Italian art of the Renaissance.

North of the Alps mankind has to contend with the inclemency and asperities of nature, entailing a heavier diet, warmer and thicker clothing, and, for the greater part of the year, a more sedentary life. The human form tends to become stronger and hardier, squarer and thicker set, but without the natural litheness and suppleness of the south. Veiled as it is by the increased amount of clothing, it no longer presents itself to the artist's eye as the most suitable object for his study. This deficiency is the great stumbling-block in northern art, and the student must begin by discarding all such ideas, as may



Decorative Design.
British Museum.

already have been inculcated in his mind by a study of Greek or Italian art.

During that epoch of time which is known as the Middle Ages, two important events occurred. South of the Alps and the great mountain-chain which links them to the east, the Old World died, wrecked and pillaged by disease and decay and the savage brutality of mankind. Centuries were to elapse before a sufficient clearance could be made for the rehabilitation and reconstitution of Italy and Greece, and the task is incomplete even at the present day.

The Eastern Empire crumbled in the dust, and amid the ruins of antiquity tyranny and barbarism reigned supreme. North of the Alps there were signs of a new birth ; the earth was in travail of the Modern World. The Roman Empire had by sheer physical force pushed back the rough untutored hordes of the north to the extreme boundaries of the ancient world, until, exhausted by its own efforts, it withdrew and shrunk within its gates, leaving an open field behind it, over which the pent-up forces of barbarism burst like a mountain torrent, sweeping away walls, posts, and bars, unchecked by mountains or rivers, carrying wreckage and destruction up to the very gates and altars of civilisation, even to Rome, Byzantium, and Alexandria. As the waves retired within their natural limits they carried back with them an infusion of the civilisation which they had destroyed. From this fusion of the ancient culture with the untutored simplicity of the north sprang the Modern World, with Christianity for its nurse.

Art has ever been the faithful handmaid of religion, and as the northern world progressed towards civilisation the two worked together as mistress and servant. The vesture of antiquity, which was first adopted in imitation of the south, was gradually laid aside in favour of one better suited to the habits and customs of the people. The Church, the one great centre of life in the Middle Ages, found the spacious vaults and arcades of the temple or basilica ill-suited to a colder climate. As the minds of men aspired upwards in the hope of penetrating the great mystery of the Christian faith, roof and spire rose higher and higher, as permanent symbols of their thoughts. Faith in things above supplanted the ancient worship of things below, and the classic temple was replaced by the Gothic cathedral.

As the vast tracts of territory north of the Alps became gradually cultivated and inhabited by a people who were beginning to learn that the comforts of blessing and peace were far more to be desired than the spoils and gains of war and conquest, a steady flow of commerce began from the southern seas to the northern and back again. The two main arteries of commerce were the great rivers of the Rhine and the Elbe, by which the products of eastern and southern countries were transported from Venice or Genoa in the south to Bruges and Antwerp or to the great Hanse towns in the north. Along the banks of these rivers or their connecting land-ways there grew up settlements of commercial people, towns no longer centred round the castle or stronghold of the local tyrant, but aggregates of steadfast peace-loving burghers, intent on their purses and ledgers rather than on their swords and corslets. Midway in the road of commerce from south to north arose the well-known city of Nuremberg, famous in the annals of trade, whose citizens were ever to be found chaffering on the steps of the Rialto or the quays of Antwerp or Lübeck.

Among people whose progress and development is as that of infancy towards mature age, the Fine Arts make but little progress. The only art which really flourished in the Middle Ages is that which is inherent in the human race for all time,—the art of the carpenter or carver. Wood and stone were the commonest and most easily procured materials. In his smoke-stained cottage, the highlander of Bavaria or Switzerland wrought bole and branch into objects of religious or domestic utility; and, as the great cathedrals raised their heads above the adjoining towers and roofs, their pillars, vaults and spires were carved and wrought with the incidental tracery and ornament which are associated with the name of Gothic, saintly figures and symbols being frequently mixed up with the uncouth and grotesque creations of a pent-up imagination. The art of the painter was but little required. The home had no place for it, and the church, at first, but little need for it. When the painter's art was employed it was merely as an assistant to architecture in the decoration and enlivening of the building; to the glass-blower in filling up the great spaces occupied by the windows among the soaring pointed arches; to the carver and sculptor in ornamenting the shrines or figures which he wrought in wood or stone; or to the scribe in adding to the

beauty and value of a manuscript. Among the numerous guilds on which the commercial prosperity of mediæval towns depended, there was no place for painters as a separate trade, they being classed with glass-blowers, goldsmiths, and sometimes even with barbers.

It was not until the middle of the fourteenth century that the painters began to take a prominent position of their own. This was mainly due to a change of fashion, whereby the devout found that a shrine upon an altar could be wrought more rapidly, with a more pleasing effect, and probably at a much less cost, by painting than by the usual process of carving in wood and stone. The early painters of such pictures had but little idea of true pictorial effect. Their groups and figures represent what they had previously seen in wood and stone; the conventionalities and deficiencies of grouping in different planes being reproduced on the panel just as they appear among the reliefs or niches of the carvings. The rigorous mysticism of the mediæval Church kept the artist's eyes and hands in bondage. To him Nature was as yet a sealed book, the beauty and pathos of simple humanity unknown. The sublimity of mediæval religion in Germany was the savage sublimity of a mountain-range, clouded and rugged in its summits, dark and cruel in its approaches, the journey across which to a better land was environed by a host of dangerous and treacherous enemies. Of the serene majesty of religion, the legacy of paganism, there is no trace in early northern art. The ancient religion, from which Christianity weaned the northern tribes, was the savage and cruel superstition of Asgard, the religion of strength and violence, of giants and dragons, in which the untamed cruelty of a wild beast was blended with the imagination and ignorance of a child. Grafted on to such a stock the Christianity of mediæval Germany inherited much that was terrible and grotesque.

When however a real demand for painted shrines and panels was felt, the painters began to take a place in public life, and schools or rather workshops for painting sprang up in all the principal towns,—Prague, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Basle, Cologne, everywhere where wealth was aggregated together; for, as in war, money is the sinews of art.

A city of burghers, intent on commerce, like Nuremberg, is never a good field for the growth and ripening of art. Though their progress

may be slow and steady, following the march of the human race, the Fine Arts love better the untied purse-strings of a prince or noble, than

Boy Angel with Emblems of the Passion. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

all the tight and bulging wallets of the merchant. A Maximilian does more for Art than all the Fuggers and Imhoffs put together, even though it may actually be the gold of the merchant which passes through

the bounteous hand of the emperor into the pocket of the artist. So in Nuremberg the progress of the Fine Arts was but slow, ministering but to the demands and necessities of daily life, as occasion called for them.

The records of the town contain from 1300 A.D. onwards the names of sculptors, goldsmiths, wood-engravers, and painters, much the same as are to be found in the ancient records of any city of importance. One point of interest among the names of painters is, that the artist is sometimes described as "Stone-cutter and Painter," showing that the two arts were practised together by the same craftsman and in the same workshop. In 1363 there is mention of one "Berthold, Meister, Bildschnitzer und Maler," and in 1393 one "Hans Backandey, Bildschnitzer und Maler." It was not however until the beginning of the next century that any paintings were produced of sufficient importance and merit to take a place in the art-history of the world.

Apart from its functions of decoration and ornament, painting had at this time in Nuremberg found two spheres of operation. These were the altar-piece and the epitaph. The votive-picture, enshrined above the altar, is a familiar factor in the art of every country. The epitaph, or votive-picture attached to a monument, is peculiarly characteristic of northern art, and is nowhere so well illustrated, even at the present day, as in the great churches of St. Lawrence and St. Sebald at Nuremberg, where many of these epitaphs remain in their original situation. The great burgher-families of Nuremberg, the Imhoffs, Holzschuhers, Ebners, Tuchers, and others, on the decease of any particular member of their family, frequently caused a votive-picture to be made, which was suspended in the church to which they belonged. Sometimes it was a mere coat-of-arms, similar to the hatchments that were lately in vogue in England; and in the two great churches at Nuremberg the visitor at this day can trace back the members of these burgher-families in this way through the heraldic emblems which cluster on the walls and pillars of the church. When in pious memory of the deceased a votive-picture was commissioned, it was usually a sacred subject with portraits of the deceased and the other members of the family below. Some of the earliest Nuremberg epitaphs are attributed to the hand of one Berthold, and they belong to the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Whether identical or not with the Berthold of

1363 mentioned above, he may almost certainly be identified with the painter Berthold, who in 1423 was commissioned by the Town Council to paint the interior of the Rathhaus. It is with this Berthold that the history of painting in Nuremberg may be said to begin. One of the paintings attributed to Meister Berthold, a Madonna of the Imhoff family, in the Church of St. Lawrence at Nuremberg, has a curious affinity to the paintings of Gentile da Fabriano which exercised so much influence on painting at Venice. It is not impossible, in fact very probable, that the impulse given to painting in Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was, even at that date, due to the constant traffic and commerce with the towns and republics of Italy.

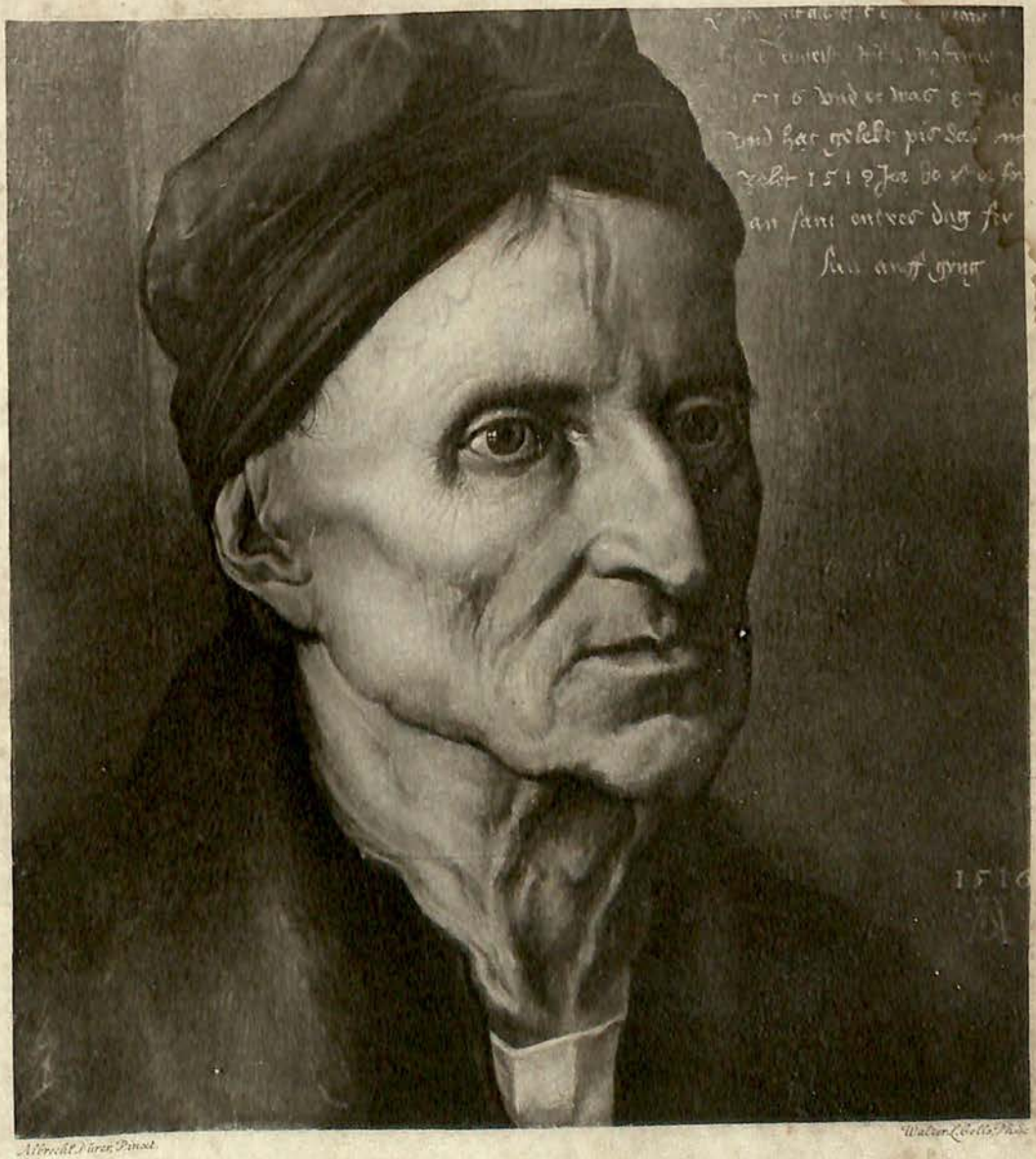
Not many years after the painting of the Rathhaus, the name occurs for the first time in 1451 among the citizens, who are described as painters, of Hans Pleydenwurff, followed in 1461 by that of Valentin Wolgemut. With these names the history of painting in Nuremberg may be said to start on certain ground, as a number of paintings are in existence at Nuremberg and elsewhere which can safely be attributed to the hands of one member or another of these families, or to the joint efforts of their firm. Hans Pleydenwurff had some reputation as a painter, enough to obtain a commission from a town as far off as Breslau. He died in 1472, leaving a widow, Barbara, and a son, Wilhelm. Valentin Wolgemut, of whose efforts as a painter less is known, and who lived in the same quarter of the city (St. Sebald's) as Pleydenwurff, died about 1469, leaving a widow, Anna, and a son, Michel, then aged 35. This son, Michel Wolgemut, married Hans Pleydenwurff's widow in 1473, and was in all probability an assistant or partner to her former husband, a position which her son Wilhelm held towards him. From the studio or workshop of the firm of Pleydenwurff and Wolgemut appear to have issued all the principal works in painting executed in Nuremberg at that date, and their pupils and assistants were probably very numerous. The only other painters of importance in Nuremberg at that time were the Trautts from Speyer, and it may be doubted whether they worked in rivalry to, rather than in conjunction with, the firm of Pleydenwurff and Wolgemut.

A number of paintings exist, some possessing considerable merit, which have hitherto passed generally under the name of Michel

Wolgemut. An attempt has been made to distinguish among these paintings the works of three or four or more different hands.[1] It is safer however to regard them all as the production of the same workshop, in which masters and assistants doubtless contributed each their respective share in the several works in hand. Many of these paintings remain in Nuremberg, some being known by the names of the families by whom they were commissioned as epitaphs or votive-offerings, such as the altar-piece in the Church of St. Jakob, the *Mass of St. Gregory*, the *St. Catherine*, the *Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, and other paintings in St. Lawrence, the Löffelholtz altar in St. Sebald, and numerous paintings in the German Museum. Others are to be found at Munich, Augsburg, Breslau, Heilsbronn, and elsewhere. A number of portraits also exist which are attributed to the same artists as these paintings.

Many of these pictures exist in the form of wings which have formed part of an altar-piece, folding in divisions, the main central part of which was in most cases carved in stone or wood, as is the case with the great altar-piece attributed to Wolgemut at Heilsbronn. The crowded grouping and the apparently grotesque treatment of the limbs and bodies are due to the combination of painting and sculpture in the same work. As the influence of the great Flemish painters began to work its way up the Rhine and pervade the rising schools of Swabia and Franconia, a distinct improvement is visible in drawing and composition; and by the end of the fifteenth century works were being turned out by the Pleydenwurff and Wolgemut firm which, with their rich brocades, elegant landscape backgrounds, and greater serenity of expression, were not wholly unworthy of being classed with the paintings of Ghent and Bruges, and certainly on a level with the intermediate school at Cologne. This may be traced to the powerful influence of Martin Schongauer, the famous painter-engraver of Colmar, who received and imbibed into his art the grace and spirit of Rogier van der Weyden and the Flemish painters, and at the same time maintained that genuine national style which is generally recognised as German.

[1] For further information see a valuable work, *Die Malerschule von Nürnberg im xiv. und xv. Jahrhundert in ihrer Entwickelung bis auf Dürer*, by Henry Thode (Frankfurt am Main. H. Keller, 1891).



Albrecht Dürer, Pinxt. Walter Scott, Sculp.

Michel Wolgemut.

In 1455, when the elder Albrecht Dürer came into Nuremberg on St. Eulogius's Day, and found Philipp Pirkheimer's wedding festivities being celebrated on the castle green, the painting studio of Hans Pleydenwurff had not yet been established in its well-known quarters on St. Sebald's side, for the painter was then living in the quarter of St. Lawrence. By the time, however, of the birth of the younger Albrecht in 1471, it had been established in the street immediately under the *Veste*, in the neighbourhood of Schedel and Schreyer the historians, Koberger the great master-printer, Walther the astronomer, and other distinguished citizens of Nuremberg. When, therefore, Dürer's father made up his mind that it was useless to waste further time in trying to force his son into the goldsmith's trade, and decided to humour the boy's strongly-expressed inclination towards painting, he would naturally turn to his friends and neighbours, Michel Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, and ask them to take the boy as a pupil and assistant in their firm. "He gave in to me," writes his son, "and in the year 1486, on St. Andrew's Day, he apprenticed me to Michel Wolgemut to serve him for three years." How much personal instruction the young Dürer received from Wolgemut must remain uncertain. He was probably one of numerous pupils. It appears from his own statement that "God lent me industry, so that I learnt well; but I had to put up with a great deal of annoyance from his assistants."[1] The inscription on the early drawing in the British Museum of a lady with a hawk, stating that Dürer did it "before he came to the painter, in Wolgemut's house on the upper story in the hinderhouse, in the presence of Conrad Lomayr, deceased," would seem to show that his instructor was not Wolgemut himself, but one of the other painters employed in the firm. At all events it would appear that the young Dürer's chief occupation was drawing, and that the lesson-books from which he learnt were the engravings of Schongauer. The early drawings of his which have survived are all pen-drawings, done in the dry manner of an engraver, with nothing to indicate the hand of a painter in them. In the wings of the beautiful Peringsdörffer altar-piece at Nuremberg, which

[1] "Doch liess er mirs nach, und da man zählt nach Christi Geburt 1486 an St. Endrestag, versprach mich mein Vater in die Lehrfahr zu Michael Wohlgemuth, drei Jahr lang ihm zu dienen. In der Zeit verliehe mir Gott Fleiss, dass ich wol lernete. Aber ich viel von seinen Knechten mich leiden musste."

was completed in Wolgemut's studio in 1487, no trace can be discovered of Dürer's hand, nor is it probable that a pupil of one year's standing would have been given a share in the completion of so important a work. On the other hand it is difficult to believe that a lad with such precocious skill as a draughtsman as Dürer should not have been employed at all on the illustrations for the two mighty volumes which were illustrated by Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff, and published by Koberger, the *Schatzbehalter* in 1491, and the *Weltchronik*, completed in 1493. They were the venture of the printer, Koberger, Dürer's own godfather and friend, and from the great number of illustrations they must have taken some time to prepare. If Wolgemut had in his employment draughtsmen of superior excellence to the young Dürer, his staff must have been a very remarkable one. Allowing for the execution of the principal drawings by the hands of Wolgemut or Pleydenwurff themselves, there remain numbers of minor illustrations which could be entrusted to their youthful assistants. Although Dürer left the studio more than a year before the completion of the *Schatzbehalter*, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he spent some of his time upon the illustrations to these works. The share of Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff in the work, as recorded in the colophon to the *Weltchronik*, appears to indicate that a part, at all events, of the illustrations was merely supervised by them.[1] On the termination of Dürer's apprenticeship to Wolgemut in 1489, his father sent him abroad for four years' *Wanderjahre*. Meanwhile the firm of Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff continued until the death of the latter in 1494, when it was carried on by Wolgemut alone. He is heard of again in Dürer's life in 1506, when Dürer writes from Venice to Pirkheimer about his young brother Hans, asking him "to speak to my mother that she may have a talk with Wolgemut, as to whether he can give him work until I come back, and then I will honourably repay him." Wolgemut, however, lives immortal in the portrait of him drawn and painted by his former pupil in 1516, in his eighty-second year, three years before his death. "This has Albrecht Dürer drawn in counterfeit, after his master Michel

[1] "Adhibitis tamen viris mathematicis pingendique arte peritissimis, Michaele Wolgemut et Wilhelmo Pleydenwurff, quorum solerti accuratissimaque animadversione tum civitatum tum illustrium virorum figure inserte sunt."

Portrait, said to be Albrecht Dürer's Father. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

Wolgemut, in the year 1516, and he was eighty-two years old," runs the inscription on the portrait, which is continued later, "and he lived until one reckons 1519 years, when he departed this life on St. Andrew's Day early before sunrise." For thirty years the rush-candle burnt in the master's studio, while the pupil went forth into the world to be a torch and beacon to the world. Between the practised skill of a working craftsman such as Wolgemut, and the nascent imaginative art of a youth like Albrecht Dürer, there is a gulf fixed which only the distant eye of posterity can see across. There have been and will be many Wolgemuts in the world, good excellent men, talented and industrious, useful and honoured in their own homes. An artist, however, like Dürer leaves his home a raw youth, stares out upon the unknown world with inquiring eyes, and eventually bestrides that world like a Colossus.

Symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space;
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!

KEATS.

CHAPTER II

Dürer's first visit to Venice—Painting at Venice—Return to Nuremberg—Dürer's remarks on painting—Early drawings and paintings—The Baumgärtner "Nativity"—The Jabach altar-piece—The "Adoration of the Kings"—Second visit to Venice.

In the previous monograph an account was given of Dürer's *Wanderjahre*; how he travelled through Germany to Colmar to seek instruction in the school of Schongauer, who died before Dürer reached him; how Dürer probably travelled along the usual trade route by Strasburg and Basle according to the direction of his godfather, Koberger; and how almost certainly he made his way under the same auspices to Venice. Before leaving home in 1490 he left a specimen of the skill which he had acquired as a painter, in the portrait of his father, which is now in the Uffizii at Florence. Apart from this there is little to show what progress he had made as a painter in Wolgemut's studio. Certainly his father seems to have perceived that his son was destined to attain his chief celebrity in the art of engraving, or he could not have selected the Schongauer school of goldsmith-engravers for the further development of his son's talents. Although the portrait of his father, painted in 1490, shows much of the strenuous side of his art, which was so characteristic of Dürer's work in his later days, Dürer was but inadequately equipped with a rudimentary knowledge of painting, when he first set foot on the already tale-worn quays of Venice.

The early history of painting in Venice has been hitherto but imperfectly understood. A regular sequence and connection had been presupposed between the school of Murano (the Vivarini) and the school of Padua (the Bellini). The recent investigations of Mr. Bernhard Berenson tend to show that a great misconception has existed upon this

point.[1] It would appear certain that the Vivarini school, the elder in

A Concert. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

date, maintained a separate and competing existence against its younger

[1] *Lorenzo Lotto: an Essay in Constructive Criticism*, by Bernhard Berenson (Putnam's, 1895).

rivals, the Bellini, and that many of the painters who have been grouped together as pupils of the latter really belonged to the former. Painting had been introduced into Venice in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. By 1440 a flourishing workshop existed in the island of Murano, which was very similar in some of its arrangements and productions to that described above at Nuremberg. The works produced by this firm of artists were altar-pieces in compartments, the paintings usually enshrined in richly-decorated Gothic frames, the chief subjects themselves being sometimes executed in wood or stone, as well as in painting. This combination of carving and painting is in strong relation to the works of German artists at this period ; and it is a curious fact that the principal partner in the firm appears to have been a German, Johanes Alamanus as he signs himself (possibly the Bildschnitzer to the firm), the other partner, Antonio da Murano, being the first member of the Vivarini family of painters. It may have been that the northern influence was at first as strong in Venetian art as that of the south ; but that, while the form and construction of the altar-piece was derived from the carved shrines of Germany, the painter's art added the grace and beauty of the south, which qualities gradually supplanted the more material decorative elements, and eventually obtained a complete and lasting supremacy.

Very soon, however, a rival school began to raise its head in Venice, that of the Bellini. Jacopo Bellini, the father, a pupil of Gentile da Fabriano, and his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni, came under the influence of the school of Squarcione at Padua, and their connection by marriage with the greatest of North Italian painters at that date, Andrea Mantegna, brought a new and powerful element into Venetian art, as represented by them. The further development of the technical side of painting, which appears to have been introduced into Venice by Antonello da Messina, was quickly adopted by the Bellini, who by their admirable paintings overshadowed the elder school of the Vivarini, and paved the way for the future glories of the Venetian school.

When the young Dürer first came to Venice at the end of the fifteenth century, he would thus have found two rival schools of painting in existence, that of the Vivarini, then represented by Alvise Vivarini, around or under whom, according to Mr. Berenson, were working such well-known painters as Jacopo de' Barbari, Francesco Bonsignori,

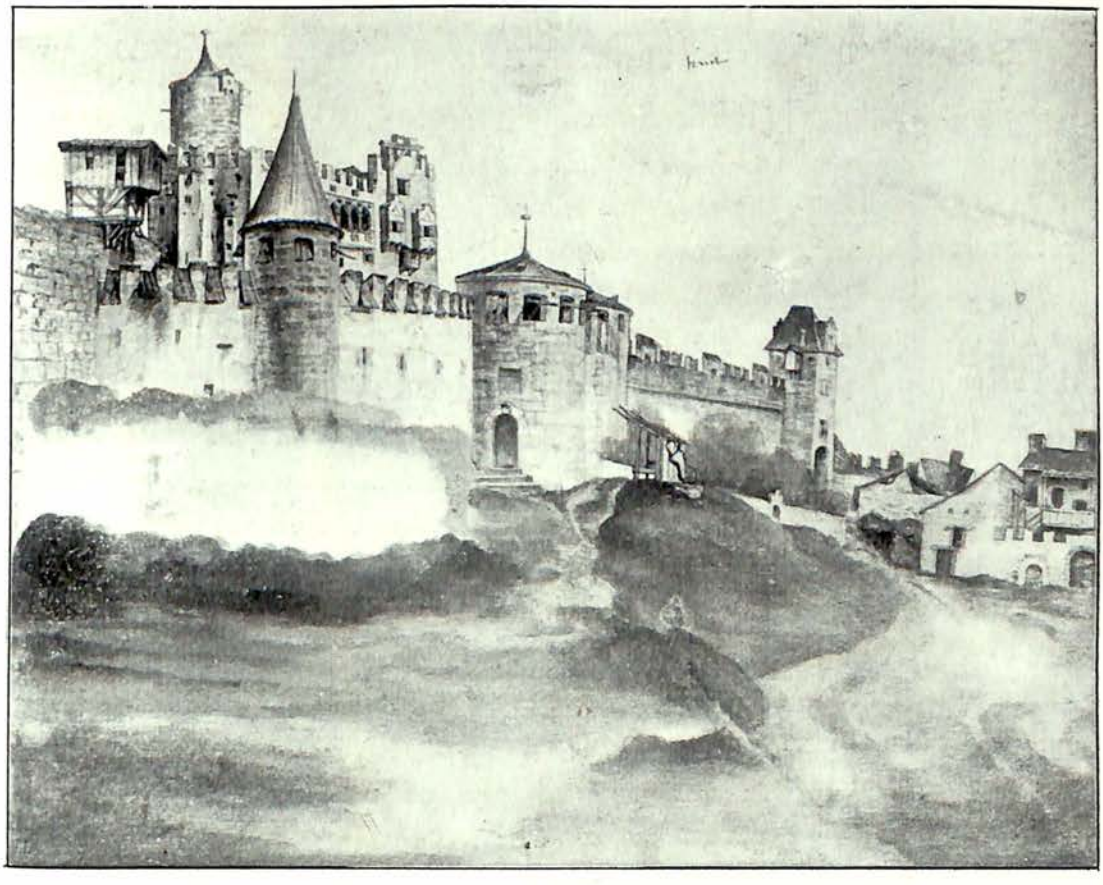
Bartolommeo Montagna, Cima da Conegliano, and Lorenzo Lotto, and

Albrecht Dürer, by himself. Uffizii Gallery, Florence.
From a Photograph by D. Anderson.

that of the Bellini with their pupils, such as Carpaccio, Mansueti, Previtali, Sebastiano Luciani, and others. The golden age of Giorgione,

Titian, and Palma was but just dawning, and the rays of their sun had not yet illuminated the earth. In view of the partially German origin of the Muranese school it is more than probable that Dürer was first brought into contact with them, since the Nuremberg merchant, Anton Kolb, to whom no doubt Dürer had been recommended by his godfather, Koberger, with whom Kolb was in correspondence, not only was on terms of friendship with Jacopo de' Barbari, one of the leading painters of the Vivarini school, but openly declared him to be the best painter then in the world. Allusion has been made in the previous monograph to the influence exercised upon Dürer by Barbari. It is noteworthy also that there are certain points in the paintings of Dürer which find their affinity, not only in the works of Barbari, but also in those of Lotto and other members of the Vivarini school. Among these are the minute and delicate treatment of the silken hair, and the intensity and earnestness, amounting almost to painfulness, in the delineation of the human character. The influence was probably exercised by Dürer, for Lotto himself was too young to have been associated with Dürer at this date. Anyhow, assuming the influence of Barbari and Dürer to have been reciprocal, it is not unreasonable to suppose that some memory lingered in the Venetian schools of the young German artist with the serious inquiring face, the ever-curious mind, and that unrivalled precision and rapidity of draughtsmanship by a hand better trained in goldsmithry and engraving than in painting. In the actual practice of painting Dürer does not appear during this first visit to Venice to have come at once into contact with, or to have been attracted by, the new technical processes introduced from Flanders by Antonello da Messina. Although thrown into greater intercourse with the Vivarini school, he quickly became alive to the majestic power, both in conception and execution, of the great painter in the neighbouring city of Padua, Andrea Mantegna. It is evident from his remarks on his later visit that his inclination had begun to turn to the works of Mantegna and Bellini. His first visit to Venice was probably a short one. It would naturally be the furthest point of his travels, and he may not have had time to do more than look round, before he received the summons from his father to return home to Nuremberg, in view of the marriage which he had arranged for him with the daughter of Hans Frey. But this visit to Venice was very far from

being unfruitful, for it was now that he was introduced by Jacopo de' Barbari to the study of Human Proportions, which occupied so much of his thoughts during the remainder of his life. Now also had his mind been opened to the wonderful perspective and the powerful *tempera* painting of Mantegna in addition to that artist's tremendous engravings, of which Dürer took specimens home. Now also he was at all events introduced to



View of Trent. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

the new process of glazing in oils, the principle of which he may have learnt from Antonello da Messina himself. Moreover, Dürer had learnt to exercise his pen and paint-brush in the practice of rapid sketching, the first artist who may be said to have done so; and, wherever he went, he carried his sketch-book, palette, and brushes in his wallet, and noted down all the objects of interest in nature or in the life of men, which he came across on his long and tedious journeys across the Alps. It is on these journeys, in all probability, that he made these sketches of wall-girt towns

such as Innsbrück, Trent, and Maestricht, marble quarries, studies of trees, etc., so many of which are washed in in water-colours, some on vellum, and then highly finished with a kind of vivid-coloured *gouache*. One of his most important works in this last manner was the portrait of himself in gaily-coloured dress, holding the sprig of *Mannstreu* or eryngo, inscribed with the reverent inscription, "Man fach die Gat, als es oben schat," which he probably executed as a gift for his betrothed. His training as a goldsmith had taught him precision of stroke and accuracy of eye; and the minuteness of his sketches in colour could have rivalled that of the finest Dutch painter in the seventeenth century. Landscape was one of his favourite studies, and Dürer may be said to have been the first painter to paint it for its own sake as a natural object, although the time had not yet arrived when it would be the subject of a picture in itself.

At all events Dürer returned to Nuremberg a painter at heart, a rival to his old master, Wolgemut, with a knowledge and experience which the elder man had never had an opportunity of acquiring. In after-life Dürer began to prepare a Treatise on Painting, or *Banquet for Young Painters*, of which only fragments remain. From these can be gathered certain *obiter dicta* which throw light on Dürer's views of the proper sphere of painting as an art.

Dürer's friend, Joachim Camerarius, in his eulogy of his lost friend, says of Dürer, that "Nature had specially designed him for a painter, and therefore he embraced the study of that art with all his energies, and was ever desirous of observing the works and principles of the famous painters of every land, and of imitating whatever he approved in them." These words would seem to denote a tendency to that eclecticism which was afterwards carried to such undue excess by the painters of the Bolognese school. Dürer was no servile copyist. He found in the works of Barbari, Bellini, and Mantegna things which were new to him, and he studied these to improve his own artistic and intellectual development. So in his studies from nature he copied what was strange and wonderful,—the curves of a plant and the bursting of its blossom, the shimmer of still water in a pool, or the flashing of a bird's breast or wing, the crouching terror of a frightened hare, or the delicate texture of a butterfly's wing, and thus laid up in his mind treasures for the *Traumwerk* with which he adorned and completed his engravings.

Weier Haus. From a Water-colour Drawing in the British Museum.

In the fragments of his treatise on painting occur many passages in which he reveals his ideas of the scope and limitations of painting :—

"To paint is to be able to portray on a flat surface any visible thing whatsoever, that may be chosen."

"The imagination of a good painter is full of figures ; and were it possible for him to live for ever, he would have from his inward ideas, whereof Plato speaks, always something new to pour forth by the work of his hand."

"This art of painting is made for the eyes, for the sight is the noblest sense of man."

"A thing thou beholdest is easier of belief than that thou hearest ; but whatever is both heard and seen we grasp more firmly and more intelligently."

"One's opinion of beauty is more credible in a skilful painter's utterance than in another's."

"Utility is part of Beauty ; and what is not useful in a man is not beautiful."

"The art of painting is employed in the service of the Church, and by it the sufferings of Christ and many other profitable examples are set forth. It preserveth also the likeness of men after their death."

"The art of true, artistic, and lovely execution in painting is hard to come unto ; it needeth long time and a hand practised to perfect freedom."

"Would to God it were possible for me to see the work and art of the mighty masters to come, who are yet unborn, for I know that I might be improved. Ah ! how often in my sleep do I behold great works of art and beautiful things, the like whereof never appear to me awake, but so soon as I awake the remembrance of them leaveth me."

Throughout the somewhat disjointed fragments of this treatise material can be gathered enough to discover Dürer's artistic temperament. Industry, practice, faith, candour, humility, hope are some of the qualities which he postulates in an artist, though indeed they are equally necessary in any other profession of life.

So Dürer in May 1494 returned to Nuremberg, married his young bride, Agnes Frey, and took up his residence with his old father and mother,—the beloved parents, who had the lion's share of his love,—and began for himself a career as creative artist in the old gabled home under the slope of the *Veste*. With a wife and the possibility of a family, and moreover with the care of his aging parents upon him, Dürer had by no means an easy life before him. His father, as Dürer has himself recorded, spent his life in great industry and hard severe work, his only object

being to earn with his own hand a living for himself and family ; and in his father's footsteps Dürer was, no doubt, determined to tread.

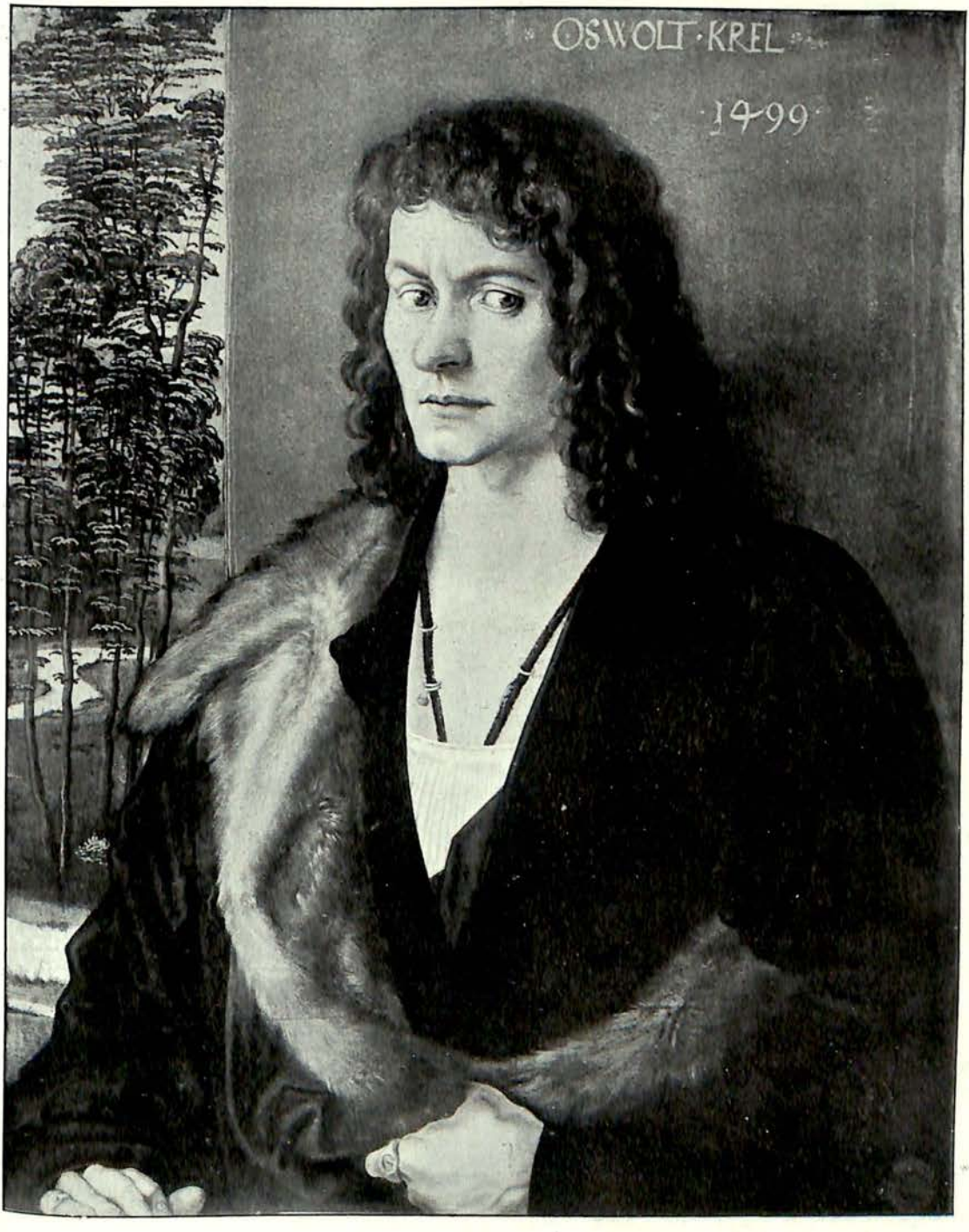
There is nothing phenomenal in Dürer's progress in art. He was no "infant prodigy," no comet to flash across the horizon and disappear in a shower of fading sparks. He was a simple, earnest, industrious artist, always working towards an ideal, which he never considered himself to have attained. It would be improbable that with his youth and inexperience he should be able at first to compete in Nuremberg with such well-known painters as his old master Wolgemut and others in the ordinary practice of their art. Engraving presented a more open field, although it was some time before his hand attained the precision of later years. Meanwhile he spent many hours in drawing from the life and from nature ; recording in his sketch-books carefully-wrought views of the picturesque objects in the neighbourhood, such as the "Weiherhaus" (in the British Museum), the view of "Kalkreuth," and the "Drahtziehmühle" (at Berlin) ; frequenting the public baths that he might study the nude in pursuance of his favourite inquiries about Human Proportion ; copying at home the Italian engravings of Mantegna and others which he had brought back from Italy, in fact laying a thoroughly true groundwork for his future artistic career. As the last work of his before leaving home in 1490 was a portrait of his father, so one of the earliest works after his return was another portrait of the same parent, painted in 1497. This portrait is now at Syon House, Isleworth.[1] Seven years had dealt kindly with the simple old man ; the face is a little thinner, the pose of the body less robust, but it is the same earnest kindly face which bade farewell to his son in 1490. Five years later, in the night next before St. Martin's Eve, the old man passed away, and Dürer was left in charge of his old mother and his young brother Hans, in addition to his duties as a husband.

Meanwhile Dürer found a patron outside his native town in the person of Frederick the Wise, the enlightened Elector of Saxony, afterwards the champion of Luther and the Reformation. Dürer painted a portrait of him in *tempera* (now at Berlin), a striking if somewhat un-

[1] The Syon House portrait was formerly in the collections of the Earl of Arundel and Charles I., and was engraved by Hollar (see the *Portfolio*, January 1896, p. 12). Other versions exist, but the Syon House portrait is more generally accepted as the original.

Madonna and Child, with St. Anthony and St. Sebastian. Dresden Gallery. From a Photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.

pleasant rendering of the Elector in his younger days, before he sank into



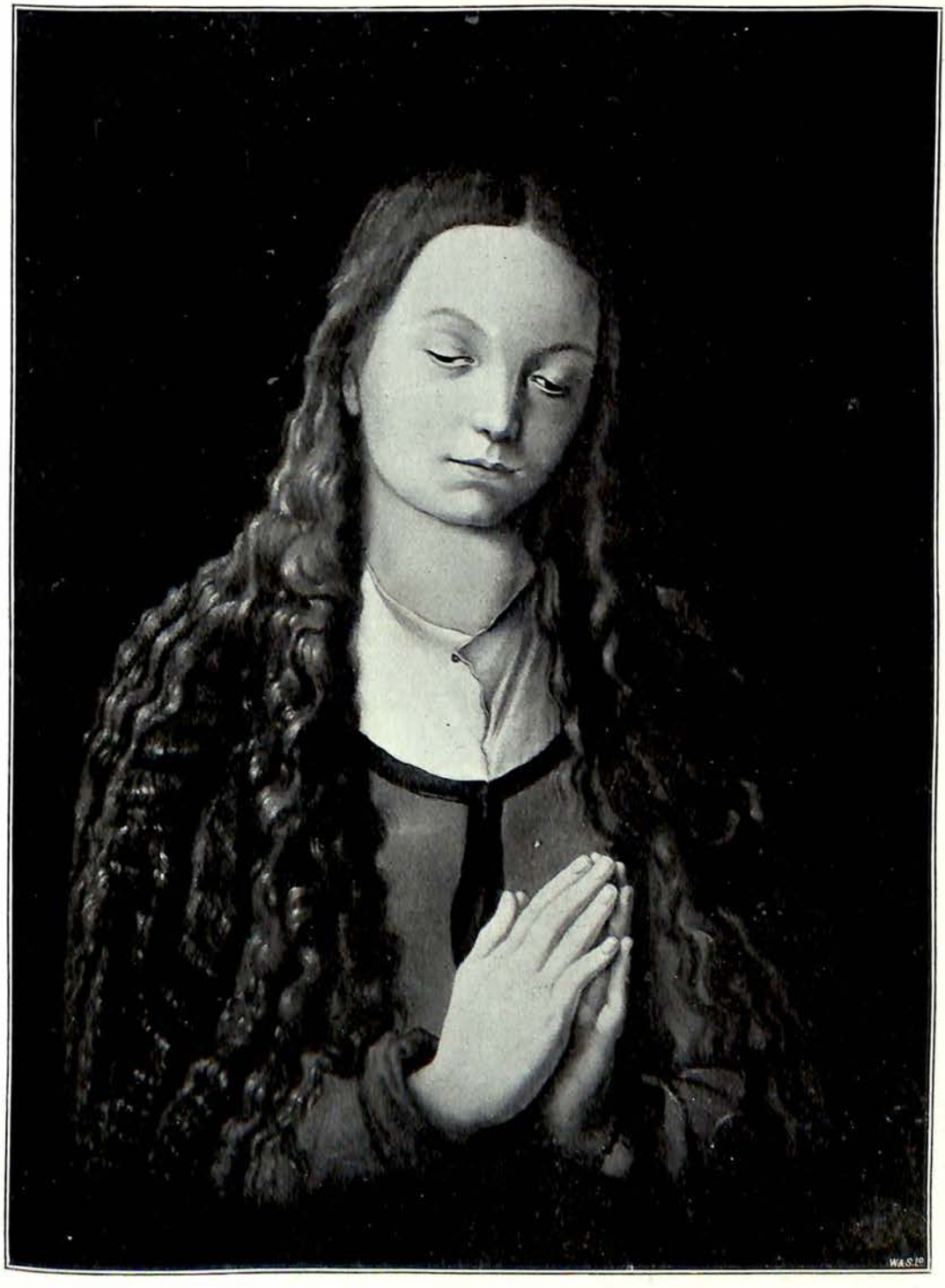
Oswald Krell. Munich Gallery. From a Photograph by J. A. Stein, Nuremberg.

the corpulence which was characteristic of his family, as afterwards depicted

in the well-known portrait of the Elector engraved by Dürer in 1524. The Elector was a consistent patron of Dürer throughout his life. For him at this period Dürer painted the great altar-piece at Dresden, the *Virgin adoring the Child*, with St. Anthony and St. Sebastian on the wings. This remarkable work is executed in *tempera* on canvas, in the manner of Mantegna, whose influence is shown not only in the handling and colour, but in the drawing of some of the incidental figures. It appears to have been ordered by the Elector for the Allerheiligenkirche at Wittenberg, where Scheurl saw it in 1506, and from Wittenberg it came to find a permanent home in the Royal Picture Gallery at Dresden. Throughout his career Dürer, with but few exceptions, carried out his dogma of painting, that it should be employed in the service of the Church, and in painting portraits. One of his exceptions was a painting of *Hercules and the Stymphalian Birds*, now in a damaged condition in the German Museum at Nuremberg. This picture, which stands alone among Dürer's works, but is undoubtedly the work of his hand, does not rank among his successful efforts. It is uncertain for what reason it was painted, but it seems to have found its way into the possession of the royal family of Bavaria, who returned it to Nuremberg.

Portraiture occupied a good deal of Dürer's time. In 1498 he painted the well-known portrait of himself in gaily-coloured clothes, one version of which is now at Madrid,[1] having once been in England as part of the collections of the Earl of Arundel and Charles I., the other in the Uffizii at Florence. Dürer's love for fine clothes was very much marked, and perhaps was a source of trouble to his wife Agnes. His long hair, no longer a tumbled mass, as in the bridal portrait of four years back, is now elaborately arranged in a mass of slender, tendril-like, golden curls. The face is long, thin and serious, almost conflicting with the elegance and gaiety of his garb, and has not yet acquired the solemnity which is so distinctive of the famous portrait at Munich. Among his friends and fellow-citizens whom he portrayed was one Oswald Krell, painted in 1499, a stern strenuous face, elaborated almost to the verge of caricature, a face however which arrests the attention and even diverts it from the minute and masterly execution of the accessories. His young

[1] A reproduction of this portrait was given in the *Portfolio* for January 1896, p. 14, and may be compared with the Florence portrait on p. 25 of this number.



Katharina Fürleger. Augsburg Galiery. From a Photograph by J. A. Stein.

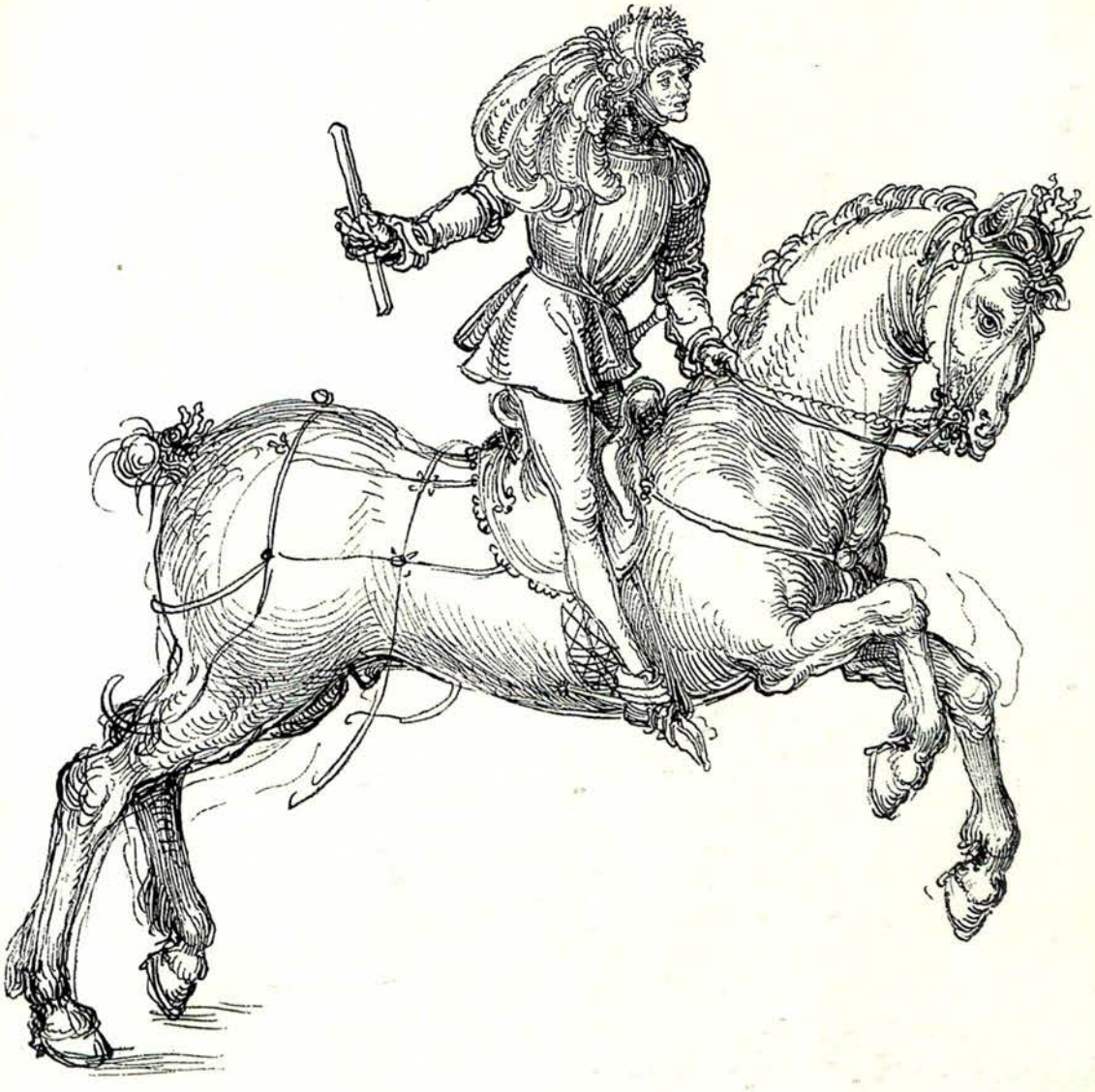
brother, Hans Dürer, is portrayed with a lean, rather haggard face at Munich, done in 1500. Some portraits of the Tucher family at Weimar

The Nativity. Munich Gallery. From a Photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.

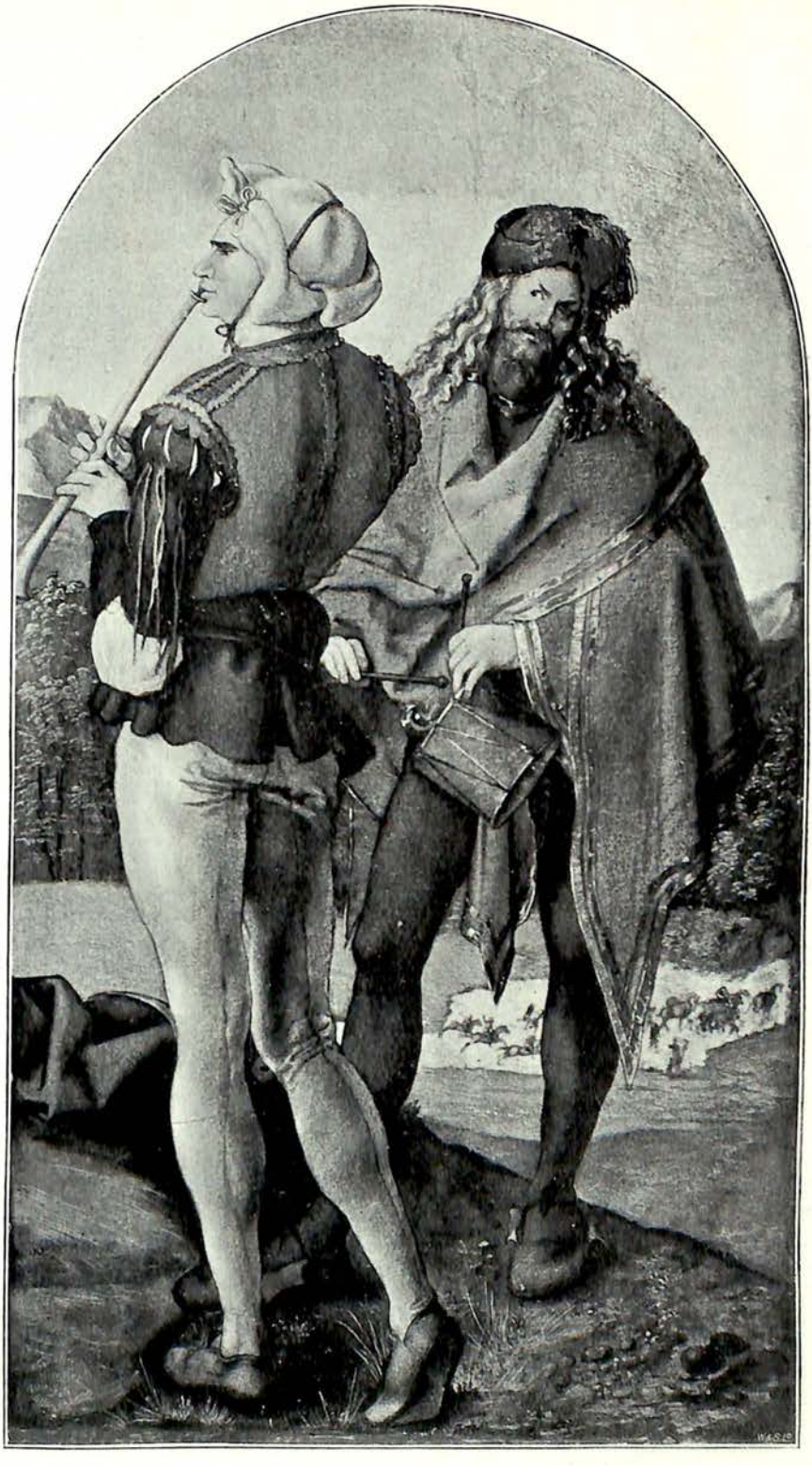
and Cassel may perhaps be Dürer's work. A greater interest, however, attaches itself to the two portraits of a young lady of the Fürleger family, Katharina by name, a charming modest German *Mädchen*. Dürer

painted in 1497 two portraits of this maiden, one with long flowing hair like a Madonna, the other with her hair plaited under a kind of horned head-dress. Both portraits bear the arms of the Fürleger family, but it seems doubtful whether they are intended, as usually accepted, for portraits of the same person. Both portraits were in the collection of the Earl of Arundel, and were engraved by W. Hollar. It is difficult to trace them now. A picture corresponding to the former is in the picture gallery at Augsburg, and another version of the same in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt. The Augsburg portrait is probably the original, the wonderful painting of the hair showing all the skill of Dürer's handiwork. Of the latter, various versions exist, one being in the collection of Sir Francis Cook, at Richmond, but no one of these can be accepted as the original.

As Dürer became better known as an artist he began to get commissions for pictures which were executed in his studio with the help of his assistants in the old Wolgemut manner. Deeply interesting as the paintings are, which were produced by Dürer or under his immediate direction, they cannot compare in interest with the work done by him in engraving on wood and copper. The *Deposition of the Cross* at Munich, the similar subject painted for the Holzschuher family in the German Museum at Nuremberg, the *Nativity* of the Baumgärtner family at Munich, the Jabach altar-piece, even the famous *Adoration of the Magi* in the Tribune at Florence, what are they in comparison to the *Apocalypse*, the *Life of Mary*, or the *Great Passion*, to the *Meerwunder*, the *Weihnacht*, or the *Dream?* In painting Dürer had not yet learnt the advantage of completing a picture with his own hand alone, and the pictures of this early date are therefore unequal in composition and execution, the originality of Dürer's design being linked with the conventionalities of an older school. The *Descent from the Cross* at Munich, which bears the signature and the date of 1500, is perhaps the same as that which Dürer is said to have painted for Hans Glim, the goldsmith, who had it hung in the Predigerkirche at Nuremberg, though it afterwards came into the possession of the Imhoff family. A similar picture was commanded by the great family of Holzschuher, and was painted to hang in the Church of St. Sebald at Nuremberg. It appears to have been appropriated by the family of Peller, who substituted their coats-of-arms in place of those belonging to the Holzschuhers. From them it passed away from Nuremberg, finding



Horseman in Armour. From a Drawing in the British Museum.



Trumpeter and Drummer. Cologne Museum. From a Photograph by J. A. Stein.

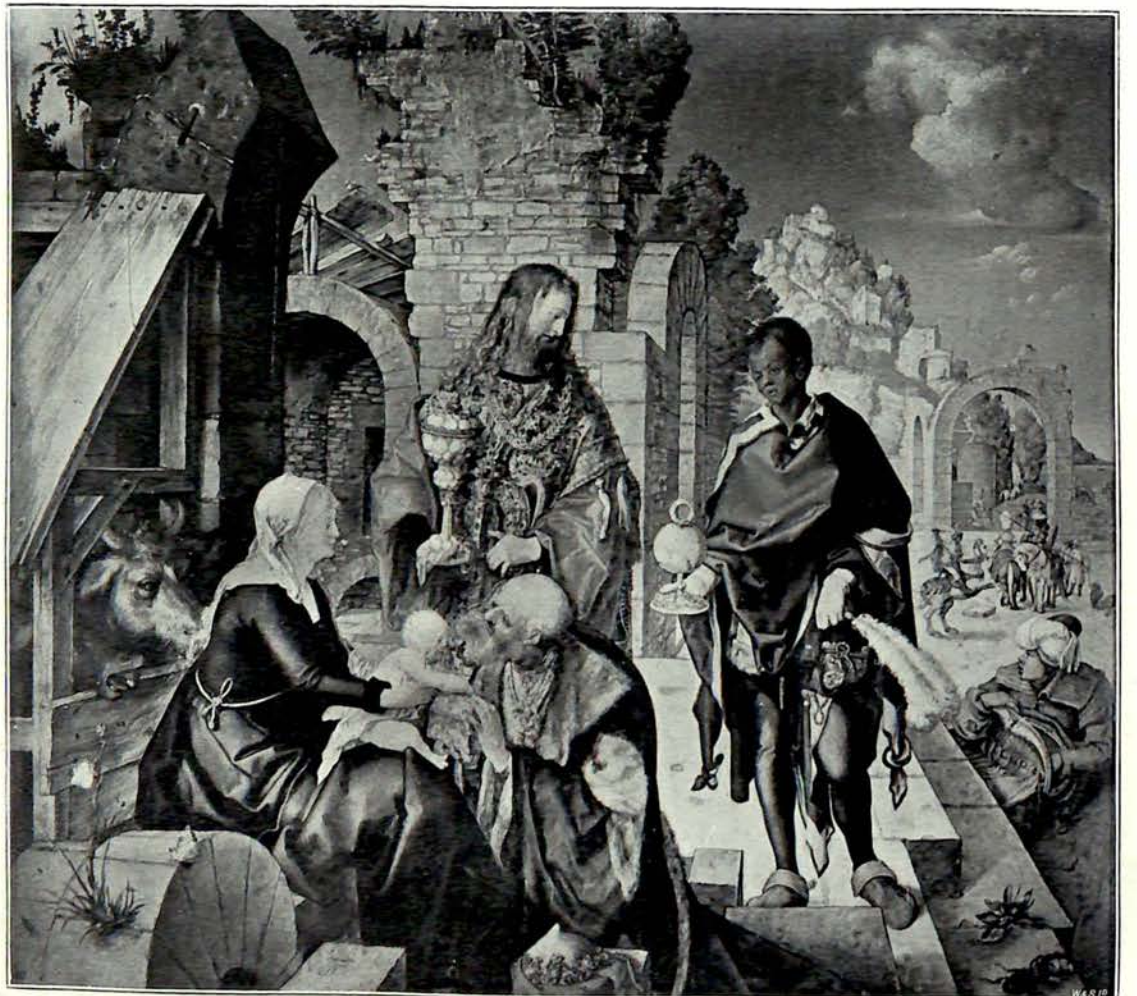
its way, with the Boisserée collection, to Munich. Ludwig I. of Bavaria however restored it to Nuremberg, where it is now placed in the German Museum.

More distinctly the creation of Dürer himself is the altar-piece of the Baumgärtner (or Paumgärtner) family at Munich, painted for the Church of St. Catherine at Nuremberg. The central subject represents the Nativity, and is obviously closely related in conception and design to the exquisite little copperplate engraving known as the *Weihnacht.* The same sunny atmosphere of peace, happiness, and content pervades both compositions; and on the wings are two figures of men in armour, two stalwart knights with their steeds, Stephan and Lucas Baumgärtner, personal friends of the painter. In these two figures Dürer has summed up the chivalry of the Middle Ages. Two earnest steadfast men are shown, equipped for warfare, not wild lansquenets and swashbucklers, who were too common at that date, but soldiers of Christ, ready for their duty, to fight the enemy, both ghostly and bodily, to defend their religion, and relieve the oppressed. In later years Dürer repeated this motive in his world-famous engraving of *The Knight, Death, and the Devil;* but he had already struck the note in the portraits of these two brothers. It is difficult to trace in this noble work any hand but that of Dürer himself.

Some uncertainty attends the authorship of an altar-piece, executed for a merchant named Jabach, at Cologne. The central subject, which may possibly have been executed in wood or stone, has disappeared; but of the wings, the panels of which have been split, the inner halves, with the figures of St. Simeon and St. Lazarus on the one wing and those of St. Joachim and St. Joseph on the other, passed into the Boisserée collection, and thence to Munich. The outer subjects have been separated; one, *Job mocked by his Wife*, a somewhat humorous bit of realism, is in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt; the other half, on which are depicted figures of a fifer and a drummer, perhaps intended to represent two of Job's friends, form part of the Wallraff-Richartz collection in the museum at Cologne. It is as difficult to believe these figures to be all Dürer's handiwork, as it is to deny his share in their production. The drummer in the Cologne fragment would seem to be a portrait of Dürer himself. Probably the idea of the picture was Dürer's, and the work carried on piecemeal in the workshop, where it is probable that he was assisted by

his contemporaries, Hans Baldung, Hans Leonhard Schäuflein, Hans Süss of Kulmbach, and perhaps others, who formed the Dürer staff, as opposed to that of Wolgemut. The altar-piece—*The Crucifixion*—at Ober St. Veit, near Vienna, which was a commission from the Elector of Saxony, was probably executed in this way, and perhaps also the Tucher altar-piece in the Church of St. Sebald at Nuremberg, although the latter work is of a later date. Drawings by Dürer exist for both these compositions, and sketches for similar works exist, a *Nativity* in the Albertina collection at Vienna, a *Last Judgment* in the British Museum, and others, which may or may not have been carried out under Dürer's direction. By 1503 however Dürer had begun to feel his own way as a painter. In that year he painted the first of his single figures of the *Virgin with the Child*, a small painting at present in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna.

A great advance was made in 1504, when Dürer received a further commission from the generous Elector to paint the *Adoration of the Kings*. This picture was presented by the Elector Christian II. of Saxony to the Emperor Rudolph II., and in more recent times was exchanged for a picture by Fra Bartolommeo from the grand-ducal collection at Florence. It now hangs in the Tribune of the Uffizii at Florence, where it holds its own in the admiration of spectators among the priceless works of Raphael, Michelangelo, Mantegna, Titian, and others which surround it. The composition recalls that of the Baumgärtner *Nativity* at Munich. The Virgin sits clad in blue with a white veil, as in the *Nativity*, and holds the Holy Child towards the kneeling king. Behind stands in gorgeous raiment another of the three kings, in whom it is easy to recognise the features of Dürer himself. It can hardly be doubted that this painting is entirely the work of his own hand. Its careful and delicate finish is in complete accordance with the method of painting which he describes in his letters to Jakob Heller a few years later. The incidental accessories are all after Dürer's heart. The tall plant and the two butterflies on the left are evidently direct studies of nature, and so is the stag-beetle on the right. One of Dürer's most exquisitely finished drawings is that of a stag-beetle, at present in the collection of Mr. J. P. Heseltine. It was from such studies of nature that Dürer drew his *Traumwerk*, with which he filled up



The Adoration of the Kings. Uffizii Gallery, Florence. From a Photograph by D. Anderson.

the vacant spaces of his compositions, sometimes crowding them in an apparently unnecessary manner.

Dürer's life was at this point however disturbed by the important event of his second journey to Venice. It is evident that it was by the sale of engravings rather than by his works in painting that Dürer maintained his household. His engravings and woodcuts, being portable,

Death on Horseback. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

inexpensive, and capable of frequent repetition, were sold at the fairs in the neighbourhood, and became an article of commerce on the great trade route to Italy and to the north. Their merit was quickly appreciated in Italy, especially in Venice, where the memory of the young German artist would still be green, and his progress in art a subject of pride and congratulation to the German colony. The Italian engravers did not disdain to borrow passages straight out of Dürer's engravings, and the most expert of them, Marcantonio Raimondi, all went even

further and copied Dürer's woodcuts on to copper, even to the monogram. Whether this was done with a fraudulent intention or not may be left an open question, but there is little reason to doubt Vasari's statement that these copies did get into circulation as originals, and that Dürer's second visit to Venice was due to his anxiety to secure his rights and save himself from pecuniary loss. And so some time in 1505 Dürer found himself again landing on the steps of the Fondaco de' Tedeschi hard by the Rialto bridge at Venice, having left his wife and mother under the charge of his friend Pirkheimer, who had not only advanced Dürer money for his journey, but had undertaken to manage the affairs of his family during his absence. Another cause may have actuated him in leaving Nuremberg, namely, the outbreak of a pestilence, which stalked like Death through the town,—a skeleton riding on a weary hack, as Dürer has represented him in a powerful black chalk drawing, formerly in the Malcolm collection, and now in the British Museum.

CHAPTER III

Progress of painting at Venice—Dürer and the Venetians—The "Feast of the Rose Garlands"—"Christ among the Doctors"—The Dresden "Crucifixion"—The "Madonna with the Finch"—Dürer and Mantegna—The "Adam and Eve"—The "Martyrs of Nicomedia"—The Heller "Assumption"—The "Adoration of the Trinity."

THERE was still another possible reason for Dürer's journey to Venice at this date. On January 28, 1505, the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, hard by the Rialto and opposite to the small arcaded piazza, which was the resort of merchant life in Venice, was burnt to the ground, some lives and many valuable documents with other treasures being destroyed. The German trade was for the moment paralysed, and temporary accommodation was provided for them in the neighbourhood. Dürer may have suffered loss of valuable stock, as well as of the contracts with the middlemen employed to dispose of his engravings, and he may have found it necessary to come in person to make inquiries. This is however mere conjecture, and the very existence of Marcantonio's copies goes some way to corroborate the reason given by Vasari. Dürer reached Venice under very different circumstances from those in which he had left it eleven years before. He himself was greatly changed. No longer a timorous student, he arrived as an artist, whose name was on everybody's lips; and as he walked through the Rialto he must have been conscious of many admiring and perhaps jealous looks cast at the proud head with its wealth of silken golden curls, and the rich vestments with which his body was clad. Great was the honour paid to him.

Art in Venice moreover had entered upon an entirely new phase

since he had left it. The somewhat dry and unimaginative school of Alvise Vivarini was in its decline, and even that of the Bellini was on the wane. "Giovanni Bellini," as Dürer wrote to Pirkheimer, "is very old, but is still the best painter of them all." Jacopo de' Barbari was again abroad, having entered the service of Margaret of Austria, the Regent of the Netherlands. Dürer was now thirty years of age. Industry and success had taught him to appreciate his own genius, and at the same time to discriminate more critically among the works of others. And so he found that the works of art which had pleased him as a lad, entirely failed to hold their own with those with which he had become acquainted. Giovanni Bellini had reached the summit of his powers, and the great picture in the Church of San Zaccaria, the crowning work of his life, may have actually been on the easel when Dürer came to Venice in 1505. Gentile Bellini was about to bring a long and eventful life to its close, but was still alive. The two Bellini brothers were closely connected with the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, holding an important post from the Signoria of Venice with a large salary attached to it. Carpaccio was still in full work. But a new school had risen greater than any of these, destined to exercise a far wider influence, and to attain a more enduring reputation in history,—the school which is summed up in the magic name Giorgione. Giorgione was now twenty-five years of age, and most of his life-work was probably accomplished. With him the Renascence of Art reached the point where it once and for all shook off the fetters of the Middle Ages. Art became once more frankly pagan although still retained in the service of the Church. Human life and the human body supplanted the Church and the Passion. Beauty supplanted mysticism, and symbolism was lost in colour. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," seems to be the motto of the pictures of Giorgione and his followers; for with all the gaiety, the love-making and music-making, depicted in his pictures, there is a tone of melancholy which speaks of the hopelessness of the day which has no morrow and the night which has no dawn. Titian and Palma followed close in the wake of Giorgione, and, as they all rose to maturity, painting glowed with the heat of a mid-day sun, and was resplendent with the hues of a summer garden. With this sensuous sight of art Dürer had little

sympathy. His mind was too much imbued with northern ideas to approve of art being allowed to riot upon walls and canvases of unlimited size. Still however he could not fail to appreciate the immense advance that painting had made at Venice during the eleven years that had elapsed since his first visit. Writing to Pirkheimer in February 1506, he says :—

> How I wish you were here at Venice! There are so many nice (*ärtiger*) companions among the Italians (*den Walchen*), who seek my company more and more every day,—which is very pleasing to one,—men of sense and knowledge, good lute-players and pipers, judges of painting, men of much noble sentiment and honest virtue; and they show me much honour and friendship. On the other hand, there are also amongst them some of the most false, lying, thievish rascals; I should never have believed that such were living in the world. If one did not know them one would think them the nicest people the earth could show. For my own part I cannot help laughing at them whenever they talk to me. They know that their knavery is no secret, but they don't mind.
>
> Amongst the Italians I have many good friends, who warn me not to eat and drink with their painters. Many of them are my enemies, and they copy my work in the churches, and wherever they can find it, and then they revile it and say that the style is not *antique*, and so not good. But Giovanni Bellini (*Sambelling*) has highly praised me before many nobles (*Tzentillomen*). He wanted to have something of mine, and himself came to me and asked me to paint him something, and he would pay well for it. And all men tell me what an upright man he is, so that I am really friendly with him. He is very old, and is still the best painter.

Camerarius, in his eulogy of his deceased friend Dürer, narrates a story which is a pleasing record of the friendship between the aged Bellini and Dürer. "Bellini," says Camerarius, "had the highest reputation as a painter at Venice, and indeed throughout all Italy. When Albrecht was there he easily became intimate with him, and both artists naturally began to show one another specimens of their skill. Albrecht frankly admired and made much of all Bellini's works. Bellini also candidly expressed his admiration of various features of Albrecht's skill, and particularly the fineness and delicacy with which he drew the hair. It chanced one day that they were talking about art, and when their conversation was done Bellini said: 'Will you be so kind, Albrecht, as to gratify a friend in a small matter?' 'You shall soon see,' says Albrecht, 'if you will ask of me anything I can do for you.' 'Then,' says Bellini, 'I want you to make me a present of one of the brushes with which you draw hairs.' Dürer at once produced

several, just like other brushes, and, in fact, of the kind Bellini himself used, and told him to choose those he liked best, or to take them all if he would. But Bellini, thinking he was misunderstood, said: 'No, I don't mean these, but the ones with which you draw several hairs with one stroke; they must be rather spread out and more divided, otherwise in a long sweep such regularity of curvature and distance could not be preserved.' 'I use no other than these,' says Albrecht, 'and to prove it you may watch me.' Then, taking up one of the same brushes, he drew some very long, wavy tresses, such as women generally wear, in the most regular order and symmetry. Bellini looked on wondering, and afterwards confessed to many that no human being could have convinced him by report of the truth of that which he had seen with his own eyes."

Dürer was better known in Venice as an engraver than a painter; and, as he was anxious no doubt to assert his skill in the latter walk of art, he excited first the incredulity and then the jealousy of the younger and more hot-headed painters. "The nobles," Dürer writes, "all wish me well, but few of the painters." Probably it was Giorgione, Titian, and their fellow-pupils who, perhaps from dislike of the reserved young German, when he actually received a working commission in Venice, resented his daring to enter into direct competition with them. Early in 1506 the German merchants commissioned Dürer to paint an altar-piece for the little Church of S. Bartolommeo adjoining the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, which was allotted to the German nation for their worship and their burying-place. This was a gauntlet thrown down to the painters at Venice, who did their best to make things disagreeable for him. He tells Pirkheimer that

> The painters here, let me tell you, are very unfriendly to me. They have summoned me three times before the Signoria, and I have had to pay four florins to their school. You must also know that I might have gained a great deal of money if I had not undertaken to paint the German picture. There is much work in it, and I cannot get it quite finished before Whitsuntide. Yet they only pay me eighty-five ducats for it.

The German picture in question was the *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, or the *Madonna del Rosario*. This festival had been founded by St. Dominic, who appears in the picture. The Virgin sits enthroned in the middle of the picture, placing with her left hand a garland of roses

on the head of the kneeling Emperor Maximilian. On her knees reclines the Child holding a similar garland towards the head of the kneeling Pope, Julius II. On either side kneel numerous other figures, on whose heads garlands of roses have been or are being placed by child angels under the direction of St. Dominic. Cherubs hold a richly-wrought crown over the Virgin's head, and others maintain the cloth above the throne. An angel sits and plays a lute on the steps of the throne. The portraits of the pope and the emperor were studied from medals, or from drawings by Ambrogio de Predis, for Dürer had not as yet encountered his future patron, Maximilian. The other persons represented are probably members of the German colony. One man, who seems to be an architect, as he holds a measuring square, is Hieronymus the German, who was engaged at the time in rebuilding the Fondaco. Among the others one may expect to identify one or more of the Fuggers from Augsburg, Anton Kolb, and Leonhard Hirschvogel of Nuremberg and others, whose names occur among those to whom *botteghe* were allotted in the new building. Dürer has signed the picture with his own portrait. He stands by a tree in the background with a friend beside him, who may be Pirkheimer. Dürer holds a scroll with the inscription *Exegit quinquemestri spatio Albertus Dürer Germanus* MDVI., and his well-known monogram. Although this painting is for the greater part thoroughly German in conception and spirit, there are motives of an Italian origin in it which show how greatly Dürer was influenced by his surroundings. It lacks the statuesque simplicity of a *Holy Conversation* by Bellini, and the crowded juxtaposition of so many real portraits makes it wanting in the repose and fervour which resides in a more ideal rendering, such as Bellini or Cima was wont to give. According to Dürer's statement this picture took him five months to complete; but according to his letters it really took him longer, for he announces its commencement in January and does not speak of it as completed until September. As, however, there is a gap in his correspondence between April and August, the letter announcing its completion in June or July may have been lost. The preparatory drawings made by Dürer for this painting are very numerous. There are several in the Albertina collection at Vienna, others at Paris and Bremen, mostly on the same bluish paper, and dated 1506. The picture

itself was eventually purchased by the Emperor Rudolph II., who removed it to Prague, where it still belongs to the monastery of Strahow, although exhibited, in a much damaged state, in the Rudolphinum Gallery.

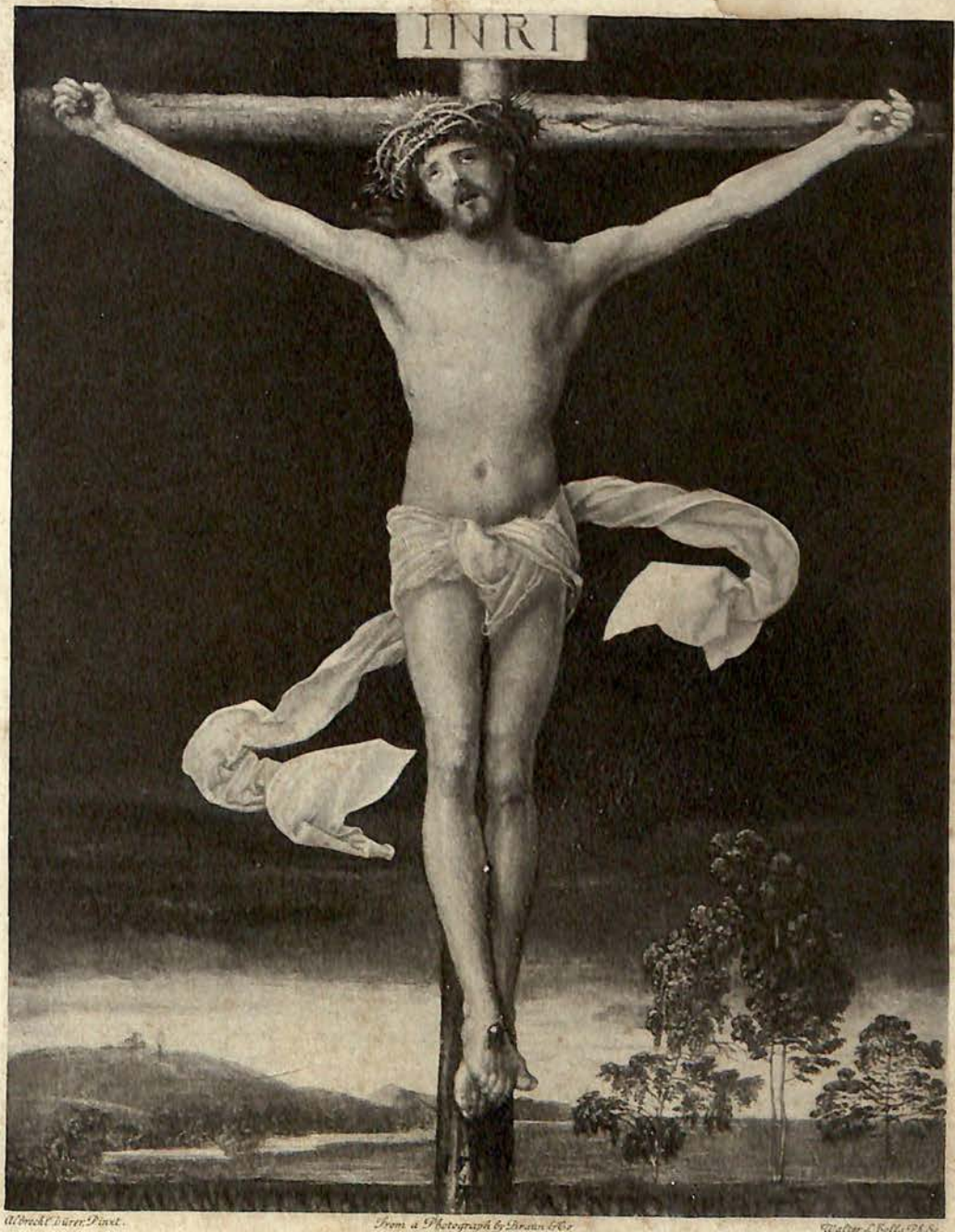
The *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, when finished, created a great sensation in Venice. Any feelings of dissatisfaction which Dürer may have felt with regard to his position among the painters at Venice must now have disappeared. He had vindicated his position as a painter, and silenced his critics, who had said that he was good at engraving, but did not know how to deal with colours. He was, moreover, treated with increased honour and respect. As he writes to Pirkheimer, "I have become a *gentleman* at Venice," no longer a mere huckster of jewellery, carpets, and other commodities. His return to Nuremberg, which was originally intended for the autumn of 1506, became further and further postponed. He even planned a journey to Rome in the train of the King of France. Meanwhile he writes that the Doge and the Patriarch have seen his picture, and that all the painters praised it. In September also he writes that he has finished "another *Quadro*, the like of which I have never painted before." It has been assumed, and not without some probability, that the *quadro* to which Dürer alludes is the curious *tempera* painting of *Christ among the Doctors* now in the Palazzo Barberini at Rome. This curious and, in its present condition, repellent composition is the very opposite of the elaborate work which he had just completed. In fact, whereas Dürer states on the *Feast of the Rose Garlands* that it took him five months to complete that picture, he as proudly states on the Barberini picture that it was the work of five days only, *opus quinque dierum*. The picture is really a group of seven heads, all apparently types of physiognomy, in more than one case very suggestive of those curious physiognomical studies by Leonardo da Vinci. There is little attempt at composition; and the painting is, as might have been expected, hasty, only a thin glazing of oil having been laid over the *tempera*. It is all however unmistakably Dürer's work. As numerous drawings exist for the heads in this picture, as well as for the *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, the suggestion may be hazarded that the *Christ among the Doctors* is really nothing more than a group of studies of heads and hands, put together so as to form a connected picture. If this was the case, it is easier to understand how Dürer could have executed it in five days, the

The Feast of the Rose Garlanas. Prague. From a Photograph by J. A. Stein.

preliminary drawings, on which he spent so much care and trouble, being in this case already completed.

Another picture, however, painted at this date may not unreasonably claim to be the *quadro*, the like of which Dürer had never painted before. This is the exquisite little *Christ on the Cross*, now in the Royal Picture Gallery at Dresden. In this marvellous little picture the blending of German and Italian feeling is carried out with the greatest success. It may be doubted whether any painting of the Italian or any other school can rival this little panel-painting, only $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high by 6 inches broad, in intensity and nobility of expression, in truth and precision of drawing, and in charm and richness of colour. Executed like a miniature painting, it is as large in conception and rendering as an altar-piece of Bellini or Raphael. The body of the crucified Saviour is German but without the hard bony conventions of northern art. It hangs relieved against a dark and sullen sky, which breaks behind the foot of the Cross into a low sunset horizon reflected in a deep-blue lake bounded by the purple hills in the shadows of evening. A few thin trees help to accentuate the solitude and pathos of the situation. Small as the painting is, it can never fail to impress, and it may be regarded as the high-water mark of Dürer's painting.

Another important painting, executed by Dürer at Venice in 1506, has only recently been treated with the respect which it deserves. This is the *Virgin with the Finch* which was lately acquired by the authorities of the Berlin Picture Gallery from the Marquess of Lothian's collection at Newbattle Abbey. The Virgin sits before a crimson curtain, gazing out of the picture with long golden hair flowing over her shoulders. On her lap sits the Child, holding in his right hand what appears to be a bird-lure, with which he has attracted a finch, who has settled on his left arm. The Virgin holds a sprig of lilies of the valley to the infant St. John, who stands with an angel by her left knee. Above her head float two cherubs holding a garland of flowers. This painting shows a distinct link between those done by Dürer before his journey to Venice and the *Feast of the Rose Garlands*. A group of ruins in the background is in some respects identical with that in the Baumgärtner *Nativity* at Munich ; while it is easy to recognise in the golden-haired Madonna, the Babe, and the crown-supporting cherubs the chief motives of the *Feast of the*



Albrecht Dürer Pinxt. From a Photograph by Braun & Cie Walter L. Bolle, F.R.S.E.

The Crucifixion.

Rose Garlands. The *Madonna with the Finch* must have been executed very soon after the Venice picture, if not indeed actually before, for it is signed and dated 1506. The painting found its way to Holyrood, where it belonged to the Earl of Buchan, at the disposal of whose effects it was relegated to a dealer's shop in Edinburgh. It was seen there and purchased by the late Marquess of Lothian, and has now become one of the ornaments of the Berlin Gallery at a considerably enhanced price. It is an open secret that the painting might have been acquired for the National Gallery!

Dürer also exercised his skill in portraiture at Venice, and alludes to various paintings of this sort. Few can be identified now, but one is preserved in the royal collection at Hampton Court, unduly neglected and overlooked by the connoisseur. It is a portrait of a young man, with a smooth, ruddy face, and hair done in the Italian fashion,[1] such as is seen in the portraits by Antonello da Messina and Giovanni Bellini, the influence of whom, especially the former, is unmistakable.

It is not surprising, after these performances, to hear that the Signoria of Venice offered Dürer a sinecure post with a good salary if he would take up his permanent residence at Venice. It must have been a great temptation to Dürer. Money was hard to earn in the somewhat stingy north, and it seemed likely to flow in upon him at Venice. Yet his heart was in his home at Nuremberg; and he did not, like Holbein, for the sake of fame and money desert his family, who were dependent upon him for their livelihood. He writes in boisterous spirits to Pirkheimer, promising to return home; but he cannot refrain from adding, "How I shall freeze after this sun! Here I am a gentleman, at home only a parasite (*Schmarotzer*)!"

One honour intended to be paid to Dürer was, alas! never bestowed. The great Mantegna, then bringing a long life to a close at Mantua, expressed a desire to see Dürer in person. Camerarius tells the tale as follows: "While Andrea was lying ill at Mantua he heard that Albrecht was in Italy, and had him summoned to his side at once, in order that he might fortify his (Albrecht's) facility and certainty of hand with scientific knowledge and principles. For Andrea often lamented in

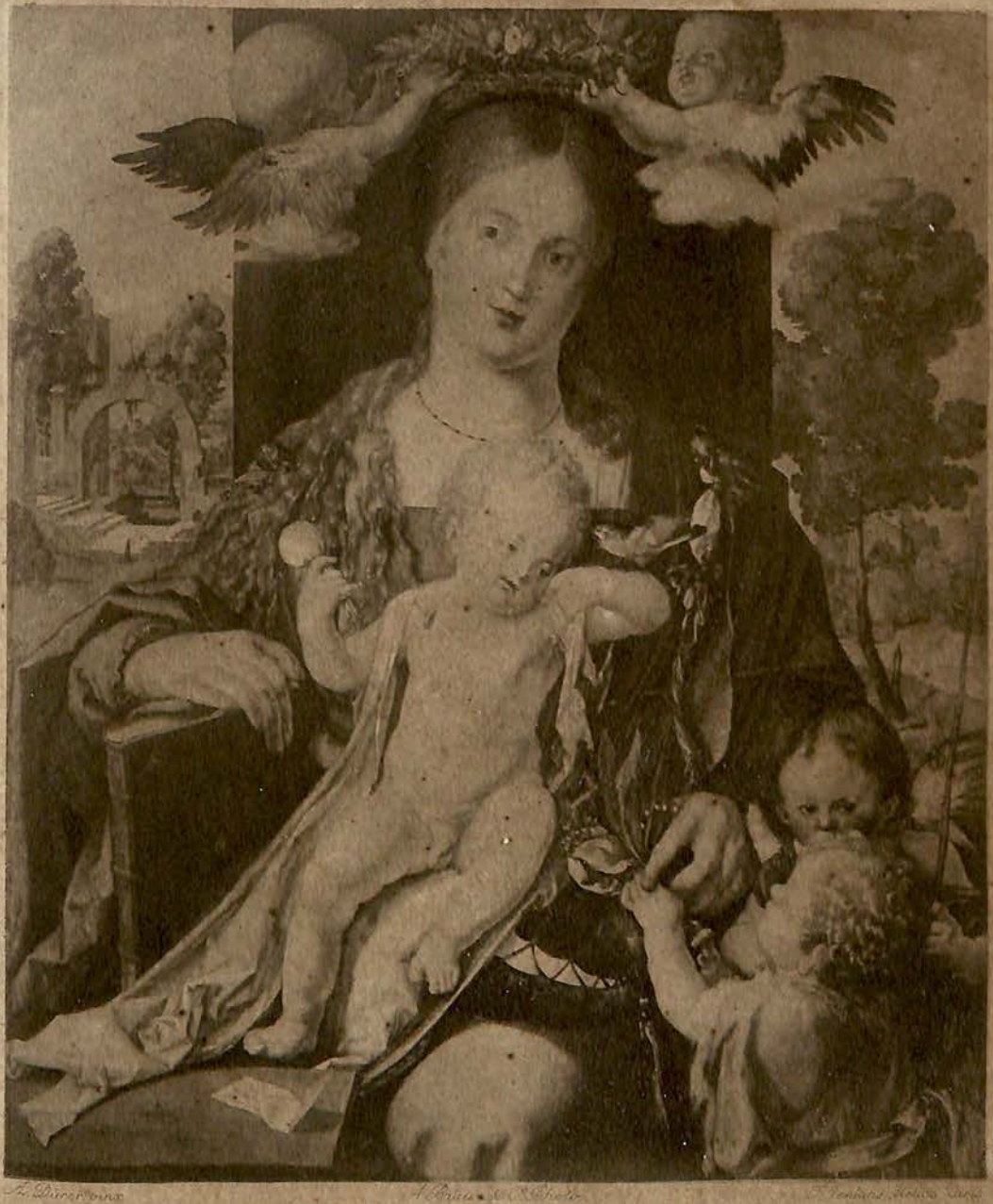
[1] A reproduction of this portrait was given in the *Portfolio* for January 1896, at page 108.

conversation with his friends that Albrecht's facility in drawing had not been granted to him nor his learning to Albrecht. On receiving the message, Albrecht, leaving all other engagements, prepared for the journey without delay. But before he could reach Mantua Andrea was dead, and Dürer used to say that this was the saddest event in all his life; for, high as Albrecht stood, his great and lofty mind was ever striving after something yet above him." Mantegna died at Mantua on September 13, 1506. A month later Dürer writes to Pirkheimer as follows:—

> In reply to your question when I shall come home, I tell you, so that my lords may also make their arrangements, that I shall have finished here in ten days; after that I should like to ride to Bologna to learn the secrets of the art of perspective, which a man is willing to teach me. I should stay there eight or ten days and then return to Venice.

That Dürer accomplished this journey is known from a statement by Christoph Scheurl, who states that the painters of Bologna in his presence conferred on Dürer the dignity of "Prince of painters," stating that they would die more joyfully now that they had accomplished their long-cherished desire of seeing Albert. It was not, however, until early in 1507 that Dürer found himself back in Nuremberg, where, according to a note on his domestic affairs, "in the thirteenth year of my wedlock I have paid great debts with what I earned at Venice."

During his residence at Venice in 1506 Dürer had not forgotten his favourite study, that of Human Proportion, the love of which he had first acquired in the same locality. His ideas on the subject had ripened considerably since he was first introduced to it by Jacopo de' Barbari; and he was much better equipped with mind and pencil to study the nude, than when he used to frequent the public baths at Nuremberg for the same purpose. There are drawings for a figure of Eve, in the British Museum and elsewhere, dated 1506 and 1507, which show how much the subject had occupied his attention at Venice. It is uncertain, however, if the companion paintings of *Adam* and *Eve*, now in the Pitti Gallery at Florence, were completed before or after his departure from Italy. Two such paintings were formerly in the Rathhaus at Nuremberg, and sold from thence to the Emperor Rudolph II. These may be the paintings now in the Pitti, which possibly found their way there with the Austrian Grand-Dukes. Copies or *replicas* are now in



The Virgin with the Finch

the Prado Gallery at Madrid. The version on one panel of the same paintings at Mainz appears to be the copy done to replace those

Adam and Eve. Pitti Gallery, Florence. From Photographs by Alinari.

removed from the Rathhaus at Nuremberg. The figures show a great advance on the *Adam and Eve* in the famous engraving of 1504. They are more broadly, more humanly treated than before. They show a

more natural and more sympathetic rendering of the living body, and are not unworthy of being compared with such voluptuous renderings of the nude, as the *Adam and Eve* by Palma Vecchio in the Brunswick Gallery. On the other hand, of the sensuous or passionful aspect of the nude there is not a trace. The nude to Dürer was merely the perfection of form and construction. He could never have produced the *Sleeping Venus* of Giorgione, or any of the *Bacchanals* of Titian. Particularly characteristic of Dürer are the animals introduced, a boar and a stag with a cock pheasant in the *Adam;* a sleeping lioness, parrots, and partridges in the *Eve.* These occur only in the paintings at Florence, and connect them at once with the famous engraving of 1504.

This triumphant rendering of the nude figure, if executed before leaving Venice, would have been the crown of Dürer's success as a painter in Italy. Its fame may have been the cause of his receiving his next commission, which came from his old patron, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, after his return from Italy. There is nothing to show that the burghers of Nuremberg did anything to recognise the position in which Dürer now stood among European painters. While the Signoria of Venice offered him a comfortable post and salary if he would only take up his residence at Venice, his native town of Nuremberg made no sign; and Dürer was obliged, as before, to get his commissions from outside. Truly does it seem that the German merchant was regarded as Pogner says in *Die Meistersinger:*—

> In deutschen Landen viel gereis't,
> hat oft es mich verdrossen,
> dass man den Bürger wenig preis't
> ihn karg nennt und verschlossen;
> an Höfen, wie an niedrer Statt,
> des litt'ren Tadels ward ich satt,
> dass nur auf Schacher und Geld
> sein Merk' der Bürger stellt'.

Truly, as Dürer had written, at Venice he was a gentleman, at home a parasite.

Dürer had already utilised his studies of the nude in one of his large woodcuts, in which he had depicted the martyrdom of the ten thousand saints of Nicomedia under King Sapor of Persia. The Elector of Saxony

now gave him a commission for a large painting of the same subject, the choice being determined, not by the gruesome and repulsive nature of the subject, but for the innumerable advantages it gave for depicting the nude human body in every position. Perhaps the choice of subject was left to Dürer himself, for there is a sketch composition of the same subject at Vienna, differently composed, which shows that he was much occupied over it. This painting occupied him a long time, and was not completed until 1508, when he signed it, as in the *Madonna del Rosario*, with portraits of himself and Pirkheimer, as spectators of the scene. Dürer, who in this portrait has discarded his coat of many colours for a

Christ bearing the Cross. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

The Adoration of the Kings. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

garb of simple black, holds a scroll inscribed *Iste faciebat anno domini* 1508, *Albertus Dürer Alemanus*, so proud was he still of his distinction, not only as a painter, but as a German painter. The crowded mass of small figures is very skilfully dealt with, and shows great forethought in the composition. It can hardly be doubted that the repute of this picture caused the famous Venetian painter, Carpaccio, to paint a similar painting of the same subject in 1515. Great as Carpaccio's talents were, they failed him here, for his painting is a confused and ill-arranged mass of bodies, depending more on general effect than on detailed arrangement. If the two paintings are compared, the German artist has an easy victory.

Before Dürer had finished this painting for the Elector of Saxony, he received a fresh commission for an important work, not from Nuremberg

or any of its citizens, but from a rich and pious merchant of Frankfurt-on-the-Maine, Jacob Heller, who happened to be on a visit at Nuremberg. Heller invited Dürer to paint an *Assumption of the Virgin* for the Dominican Church of St. Thomas at Frankfurt, to which he was a benefactor, and where he intended to be buried. A series of letters have been preserved from Dürer to Heller on the subject of this painting, which, if they strike a discordant note in the peaceful tenor of Dürer's life, throw a valuable light upon his method and ideas of painting. The picture was to consist of a central subject, containing the "Assumption," the Virgin seated in the clouds, crowned by God the Father and by Christ; while the disciples are grouped round the empty tomb on earth below. Dürer made numberless careful studies for the different parts of this picture, and no less than twenty-one have been preserved, for the most part executed in Indian ink, heightened with white, upon a prepared greenish-gray ground. Writing to Heller in August 1507 Dürer says that his work for the Duke of Saxony has been delayed by an attack of fever, so that he has not yet got to work on Heller's picture.

Although I have not yet begun the panel, I have got it from the joiner and have paid away for it the money you gave me. He would not lower his price for it, though I thought he did not deserve so much. I have given it to a preparer, who has whitened it and painted it and will put on the gilding next week. I did not want to receive any money in advance for it till I began to paint it, which, if God will, shall be the next thing after the Prince's work; for I do not like to begin too many things at once, that I may not become wearied.

Dürer, however, had not been able to begin Heller's picture by March 1508, for he writes then :—

In a fortnight I shall be ready with Duke Friedrich's work; after that I shall make a beginning with your work, and, as my custom is, I will not paint any other picture till it is finished. I will be sure carefully to paint the middle panel (*das mittler Blatt*) with my own hand; apart from that, the outer sides of the wings are already sketched in—they will be in stone-colour; I have also had the ground laid.

In August 1508 Dürer reports progress to his somewhat impatient patron :—

The wings (he says) have been painted in stone-colours on the outside, but they are not yet varnished; inside, the whole of the ground has been laid so that

it is ready to paint on. The middle panel (*Dass Caput*) I have outlined with the greatest care and at cost of much time; it is also laid over with two very good colours upon which I can begin to paint the ground. For I intend, so soon as I hear that you approve, to paint the ground some four, five, or six times over, for clearness' and durability's sake, using the very best ultramarine for the purpose that I can get. And no one shall paint a stroke on it except myself, and I shall devote much time to it.

In his book on painting Dürer says :—

In order to make such things, it is well for a man, first of all, to draw the outlines of his picture as he intendeth it to be, before he setteth about his work, so that he may see whether there be not something in the figures that might be improved. . . . It is therefore needful for every artist to learn to draw well, for this is beyond measure serviceable in many arts, and much dependeth thereon.

Dürer adds, in the last letter quoted, that he hopes that Heller's patience will not be tried. Moreover, that it will cost him much more than the 130 Rhenish florins, for which he had bargained, if he painted it as carefully as he wished to do. Heller's patience was however tried, and the letters become a trifle acrimonious in their tone. In November 1508 Dürer complains very much of Heller's language to others respecting Dürer's share in the bargain, and declares that he has not broken his promise in any way. He was using the best and most expensive colours, and doing no other work except Heller's. As for the greatest possible pains to be taken, Dürer says that if he did that, the painting would never be finished, as it would take him six months to finish the face alone. Moreover, such minute finishing was not required in an altar-piece, where it could not be seen. In March 1509 Dürer informs Heller that he has been steadily working at his picture since the preceding Easter, and that no payment in money could recoup him for his trouble and expenses. He intended, however, to finish the picture for his own honour as much as Heller's. He was prepared for adverse criticism, but only cared for praise from those whose opinion was of any value. July came and the picture was not delivered. Dürer writes that he does not intend to hurry over it and slur his work, and offers to return Heller his money if Heller now did not want to have the picture. However, the picture was nearly finished, and Dürer writes rather severely to Heller offering

to send him the picture, although he could get elsewhere nearly double the amount agreed to be paid for it.

I only wish (he writes) I had painted it just in the way you bargained for—I should have finished it in half a year.

In August 1509 Dürer at last writes to Heller that he has packed up the picture and handed it over to Imhoff, the banker, to be sent to Frankfurt.

I have painted it with great care (he reiterates), as you will see. It has also been painted with the best colours I could get. It is painted with good ultramarine, under and over, and over that again, some five or six times; and then after it was finished I painted it again twice over, so that it may last a long time. If it be kept clean I know it will remain bright and fresh five hundred years, for it is not done as men are wont to paint.

Again he writes :—

If any one wants to see it, let it hang forward two or three finger-breadths, for then the light is good to see by. And when I come over to you, say in one, two, or three years' time, if the picture is properly dry, it must be taken down, and I will varnish it over anew with some excellent varnish, which no one else can make; it will then last a hundred years longer than it would before. But don't let anybody else varnish it, for all other varnishes are yellow, and the picture would be ruined for you. And if a thing on which I have spent more than a year's work were ruined, it would be grief to me. When you have it set up, be present yourself to see that it gets no harm. Deal carefully with it, for you will hear from your own and from foreign painters how it is done.

By October of the same year Heller had received the picture and expressed his satisfaction. Dürer writes in reply in a cheerful mood, thanking Heller for his kindness, and saying that he would rather have kept Heller's friendship than get a greater price for the picture.

For a hundred years the *Assumption* hung in the church at Frankfurt over Heller's grave. Then the Emperor Rudolph II., a consistent admirer of Dürer's work, tried to get it for 10,000 florins (Heller had paid Dürer 130 florins!). Unluckily the prize fell to the Elector Maximilian of Bavaria, who carried it off to Munich, where it was destroyed by fire in the Palace, in April 1674. It had been replaced in the church by a copy executed by Paul Juvenel of Nuremberg, a skilful painter, and this remains with the original wings in the Saalhof

at Frankfurt. On the wings, which were probably completed by Dürer's assistants, are inside the Martyrdoms of St. James and St. Catherine, with portraits of Jacob Heller and his wife Katharina von Melem below them; and on the outside four groups of saints in "stone-colour."

A Flagellant. From a Drawing in the British Museum (for a Wood-Engraving).

The central subject is signed, as usual, by a standing portrait of Dürer himself, in a gray dress edged with red, pointing to the statement that he, the German, had painted it in 1509.

In one of his earlier letters to Heller, Dürer speaks of a *Madonna*

painted by him, which Dürer says Heller had noticed in his house. Later on he says that he has sold it to the Bishop of Breslau for 72 florins, which sum Dürer had some difficulty in recovering. This may be the painting of the Virgin in a scarlet robe, with a tall plant of iris by her, signed and dated 1508, which is now in the collection of Sir Francis Cook at Richmond, but it has suffered so much that it is difficult to trace with certainty the actual hand of Dürer in it. A copy of this picture is at Prague.

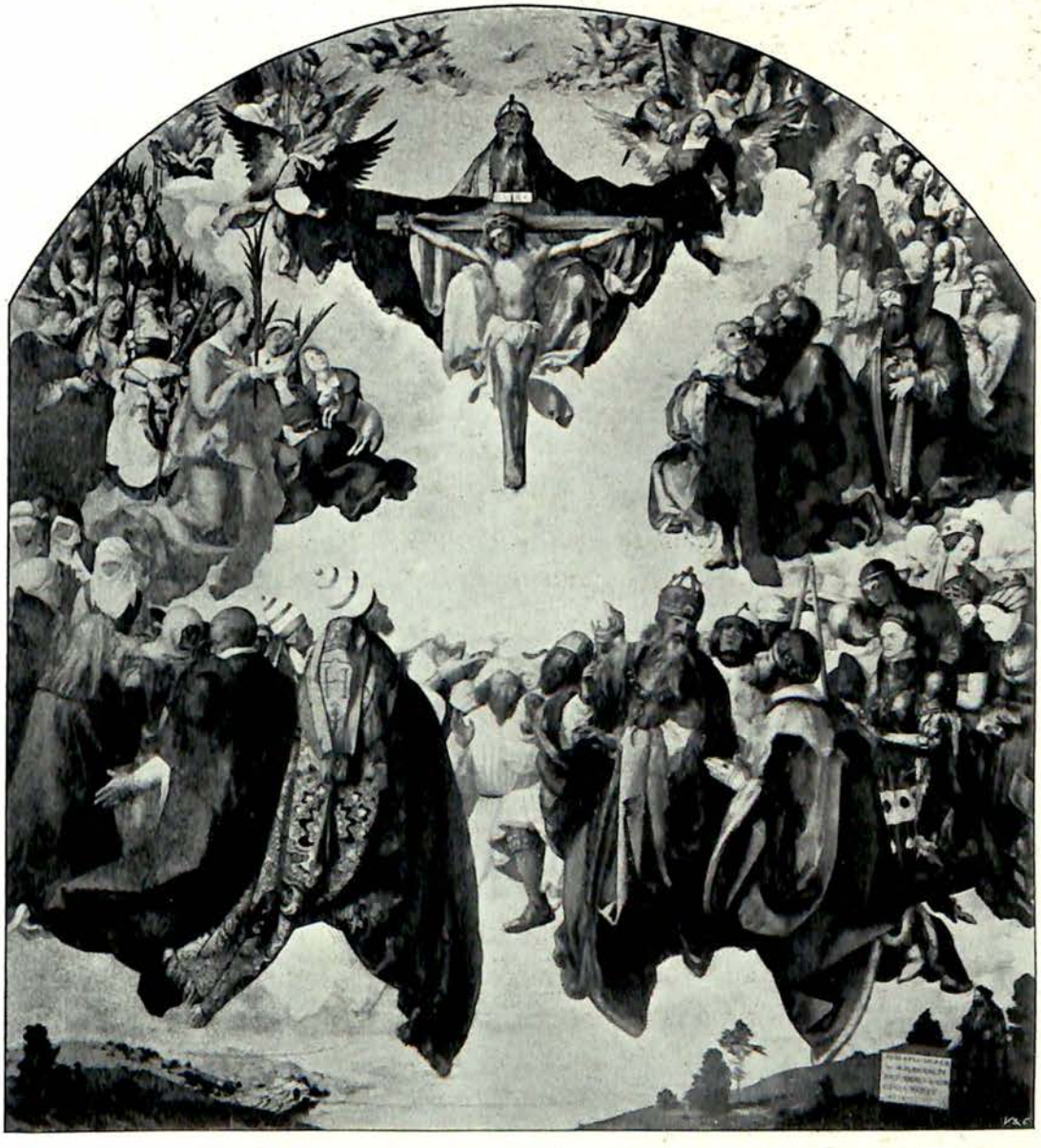
It is evident that painting in Dürer's manner was hardly productive of good business. To paint one picture in more than a whole year, and to exhaust all the money agreed upon in the materials for the picture, was hardly the way to support a wife and aged mother in addition to the ordinary expenses of life. It is not surprising, therefore, that Dürer should write to Heller :—

> No one shall ever compel me to paint a picture again with so much labour. Herr Georg Tausy himself besought me to paint him a Madonna in a landscape with the same care and of the same size as this picture, and he would give me four hundred florins for it. That I flatly refused to do, for it would have made a beggar of me. Of ordinary pictures, I will, in a year, paint a pile which no one would believe it possible for one man to do in the time. But very careful nicety does not pay. So, henceforth, I shall stick to my engraving ; and, had I done so before, I should to-day have been a richer man by one thousand florins.

So Dürer determined to give up painting on so elaborate a scale, and to devote all his skill and patience to the more profitable trade of engraving. In 1508 he obtained from the Town Council of Nuremberg a privilege to prevent the fraudulent copying of his prints. He set to work and completed the *St. Eustace*, the *Nemesis*, and other important single engravings. He finished and prepared for publication in book form the *Life of Mary*, the *Great Passion*, and the *Little Passion*, and to this series of wood-engravings he added a new edition of his *Apocalypse*. He commenced also his series of *The Passion*, engraved upon copper. Moreover, he quitted his old home, "Unter der Vesten," and removed to the well-known house in the Zistelgasse by the Thiergärtnerthor. In 1510 he began his experiments in engraving with the dry point, and with aqua fortis.

In spite however of his resolution to abandon painting on the grand

scale, he had accepted a commission for a great picture, which proved the most important which he ever executed. A Nuremberg worthy, one Matthäus Landauer, smith and statue founder, had been concerned in

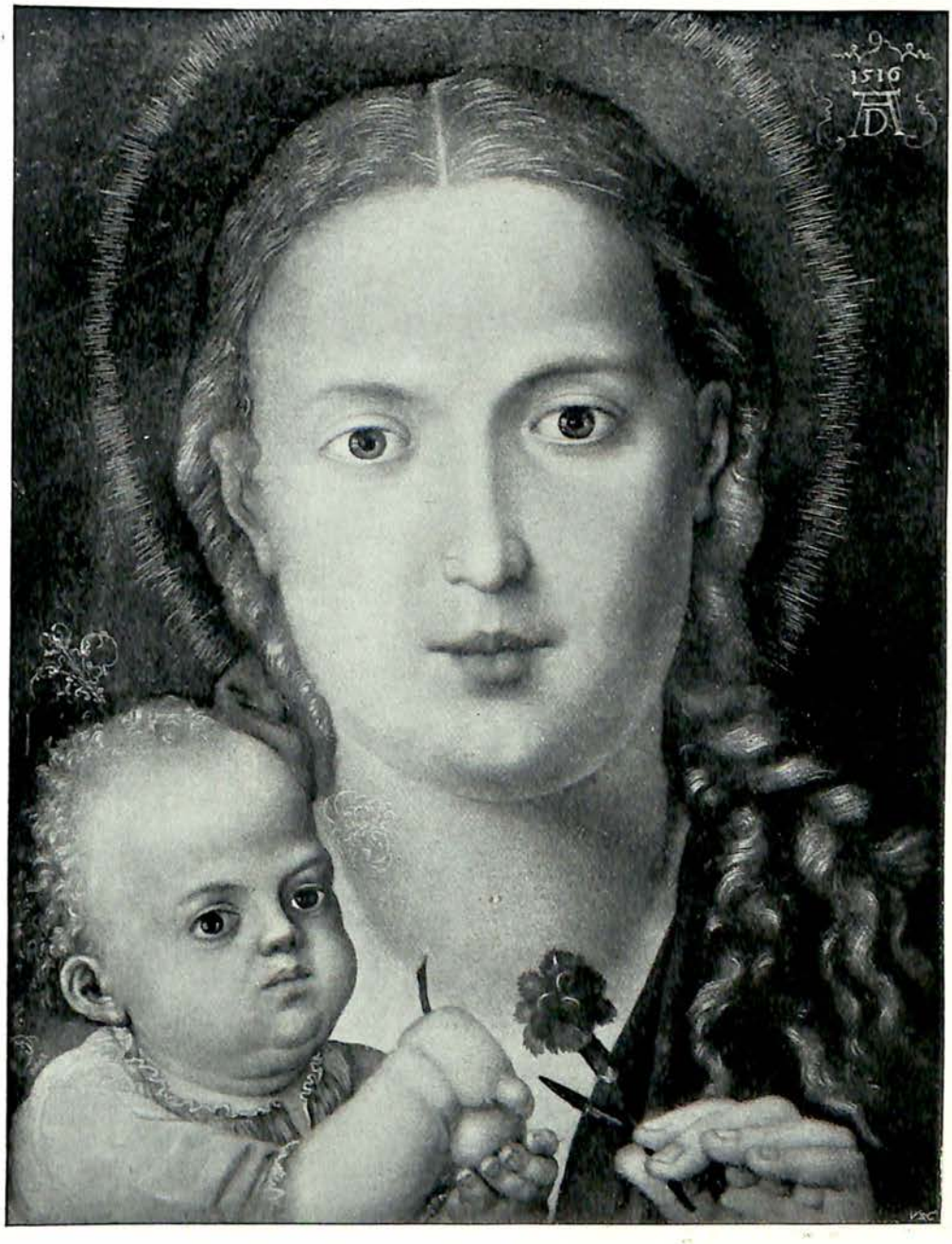


The Adoration of the Trinity. Imperial Gallery, Vienna.
From a Photograph by J. A. Stein.

the erection of an almshouse, dedicated to All Saints. In 1508 he added a chapel to this, and Dürer was invited to paint an altar-piece for it, representing "The Adoration of the Trinity by All Saints."

The painting is the simplest and most complete conception of Dürer's matured genius. The Holy Trinity floats in the air suspended by choiring angels, and adored by tiers of saints, who float around and below the divine group. Below lies, radiant in evening light, an exquisite view of a land-locked lake with wooded hills, perhaps a reminiscence of the Lago di Garda, on one side of which stands the painter holding a tablet with an inscription. On this he records that it was the work of Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg. *Albertus Dürer Noricus faciebat anno a Virginis Partu*, 1511. It was the first painting he had executed with his own hands for his native town. In the upper tier of saints are those who were the recognised inmates of heaven,—Moses, David, John the Baptist, Catherine, Barbara, Agnes, and others. Below float the Emperor, the Pope, and other good men and women, drawn from every rank of life, and containing a number of contemporary portraits. It is one of the noblest pictures ever painted, and may be compared with the famous *Disputa* by Raphael in the Stanza della Segnatura at the Vatican. For this painting Dürer designed an architectural frame of great beauty, in the Italian Renaissance style. A drawing for this frame in the collection of the Duc d'Aumale is dated 1508. It is possible, therefore, that the painting was promised to Landauer during that year before the experience of Heller's picture had caused Dürer to determine never to attempt pictures on this scale again. In 1585 the Town Council of Nuremberg robbed Landauer's almshouses of the *Allerheiligenbild* and sold it to the Emperor Rudolph II. It now hangs in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. The Town Council generously replaced it by a copy, for which they retained the original frame. Among the saints in the lower group on the left hand is the donor, Landauer, kneeling in modest awe. A drawing for this portrait, executed in black chalk, and dated 1511, formerly in Mr. Mitchell's collection, is, curiously enough, the only drawing known to exist as an original study for this picture.

This was the last of Dürer's "great" pictures. He continued to paint Madonnas, such as the *Virgin with the Cut Pear* of 1512, now in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, and the *Virgin with the Pink* at Augsburg, painted in 1516, in which Dürer is obviously trying to construct a figure amounting to strictly measured proportions, taking a simple



The Madonna with the Pink. Augsburg Gallery. From a Photograph by J. A. Stein.

German woman as his model. His studies of the nude figure were still carried on, and in 1518 he produced from them his painting of *Lucretia* at Munich, a not very pleasing composition. Engraving, and the cares of publication, now occupied Dürer's mind, and he was able also to develop a wonderful skill in decorative and ornamental design, for which he had hitherto found but little scope.

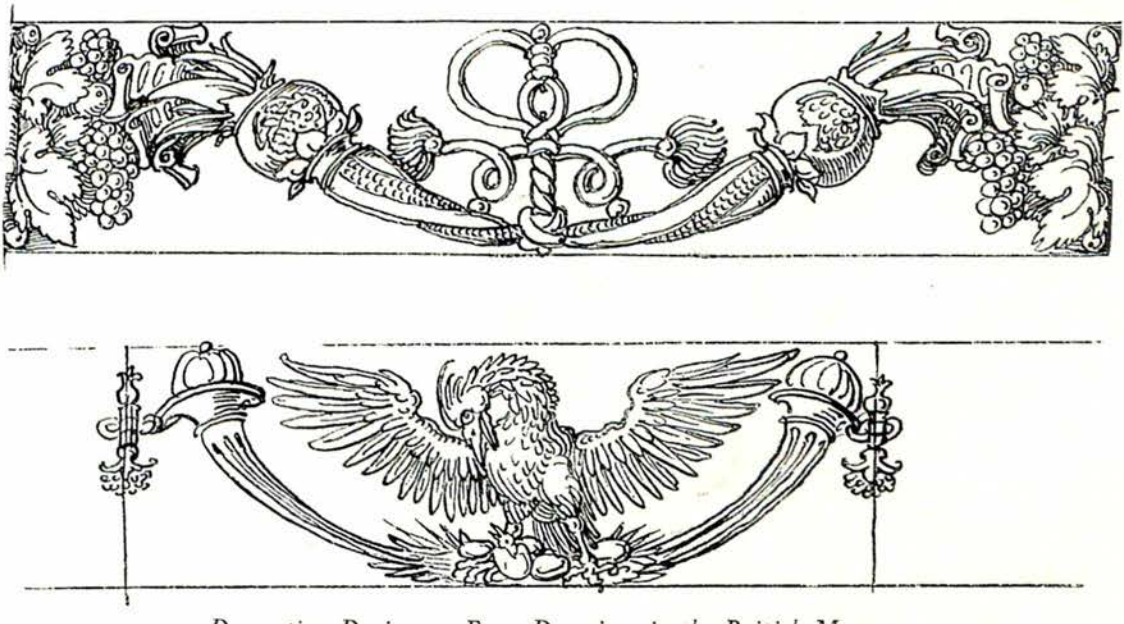
CHAPTER IV

Return to Nuremberg—Commission for the Town Council—The Emperor Maximilian—Journey to the Netherlands—Return to Nuremberg—Letter to the Town Council—The Four Temperaments—Dürer's death—His position as a painter—Nuremberg and the works of Dürer—Dürer's paintings and drawings.

DÜRER now settled down to a regular life as a citizen of Nuremberg, working at his engravings and woodcuts; sometimes, in the daytime, painting portraits of his friends and an occasional Madonna. In 1510 the Town Council of Nuremberg discovered, apparently for the first time, that they had an artist of European reputation among their fellow-citizens, and so they gave him what no doubt seemed to their minds an important and munificent commission. Every Easter a festival was held in Nuremberg, known as the *Heiligthumfest*, or, more colloquially, as *Heiltum*, when various relics of a sacred and historical nature were exhibited on a stage in the market-place for the awe and veneration of the crowd. Among these relics were treasured the crown of Charlemagne, and various insignia of King Sigismund of Bohemia, who had been a benefactor to the town. So the Town Council put their hands into the town-purse, and no doubt after the usual wrangle, with which such bodies inaugurate any unusual expenditure of this kind, they commissioned Dürer to paint two large portraits of Charlemagne and Sigismund to be shown at the festival. Such was the work given by these worthy citizens, the Beckmessers of their day, to the painter of the *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, the *Assumption*, and *All Saints!* Dürer however was not a man to stint his work, and he made most careful and accurate studies of all the relics which he had to introduce into these pictures, although, as might have been expected, he did not waste too

much time on the actual painting. As a Nuremberg citizen, he would treat with reverence the objects which he had been accustomed from his childhood to gaze on with awestruck eyes. The two paintings were not completed until 1512. They still remain at Nuremberg in the German Museum; but Dürer's handiwork has long been concealed, if not altogether destroyed, by repeated re-paintings. Dürer received 85 florins for the two; Heller had paid him 130 florins for a single painting, and that had not covered the cost of material!

In the portrait of Charlemagne Dürer has introduced the features of a man with whom he became acquainted at this time, and with whom



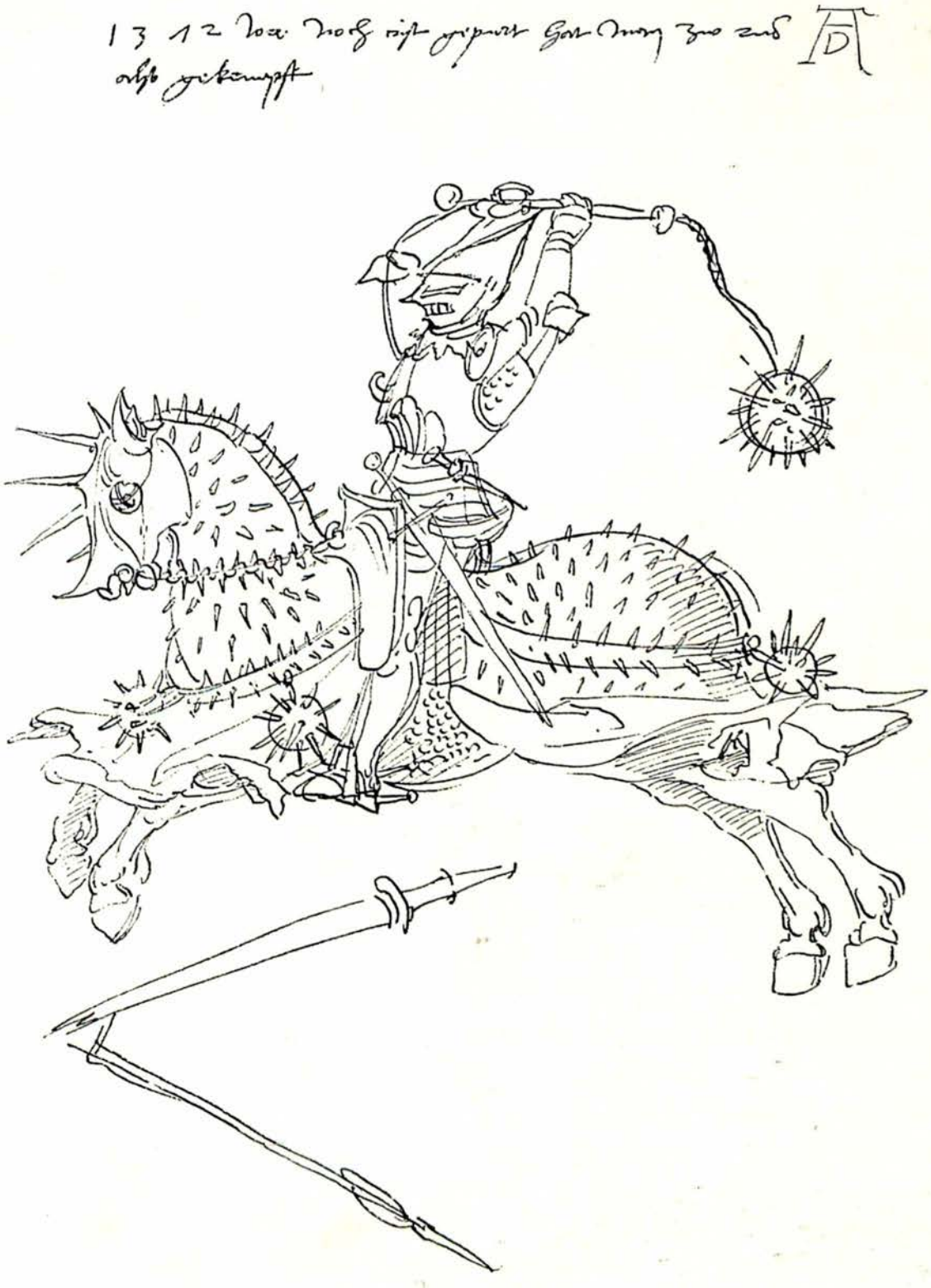
Decorative Designs. From Drawings in the British Museum.

he was to be associated in many ways during the next few years. This was Joannes Stabius, historian and poet-laureate to the Emperor Maximilian, who came with his imperial patron to Nuremberg in February 1512.

Some account has been given in the former monograph of the work on which Dürer was employed by Maximilian for the next two or three years. A new field was opened for the exercise of Dürer's art, one in which it had been somewhat restrained by the limitations of subject in his paintings and engravings. As a decorative artist, Dürer now gave full play to the lighter and more sportive side of his genius. Nothing was too large, too tall, no ideas too vast to satisfy the wishes of a man

like Maximilian. Everything which he did, or commanded to be done, was to be on the biggest possible scale, and the work of the best artists. The only essential matter was that every book, print, drawing, painting, should be for the glory of Maximilian. In Augsburg, Nuremberg, Prague, in every important town throughout the Holy Roman Empire, the best artists were busied night and day upon the greatest achievements, certainly in size, which the engraver's art could produce. Many felt, in anticipation, the gold chain of merit already on their shoulders, and the gold pieces weighty in the wallet at their waist. Alas! however, for human hopes and the words of Princes, for in most cases the chain was but the fetters of servitude, and the gold pieces, as in the fairy-tale, turned out but dry leaves in the end.

Occupied as he was in the drawings for the *Triumphal Arch*, the *Triumphal Car*, the *Triumph of Maximilian*, the *Patron Saints of the House of Austria*, on designs for armour and jewellery for the Emperor's adornment, Dürer had but little spare time for painting, although it was during these years that he produced some of his most important engravings. His domestic life was clouded by the loss of his beloved mother, and to his temperament at this date are due his most important engravings, as described in the previous monograph. As the great French artist, Jean François Millet, said in later days, "Le douleur est, peut être, ce qui fait le plus exprimer les artistes." Such time as he was able to devote to painting was chiefly occupied in studying experiments, such as the heads of the apostles Philip and James, painted in *tempera* in 1516, and now in the Uffizii at Florence. Meanwhile Stabius also kept him at work upon designs for astronomical tables and the like. One commission from Maximilian brought out the latent wit and humour of Dürer's mind, the true "humanist" disposition. Among the many magnificent orders given by Maximilian was one to Schönsperger, the chief printer at Augsburg, to print a *Book of Hours* on fine vellum leaves with large margins, a special fount of type being cast for the printing; for nothing that had been used before could be good enough for so great an Emperor. One copy was sent to Dürer, who was instructed to ornament it with illustrations drawn in the margins, the design and invention being left to Dürer himself. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of Maximilian's character, he



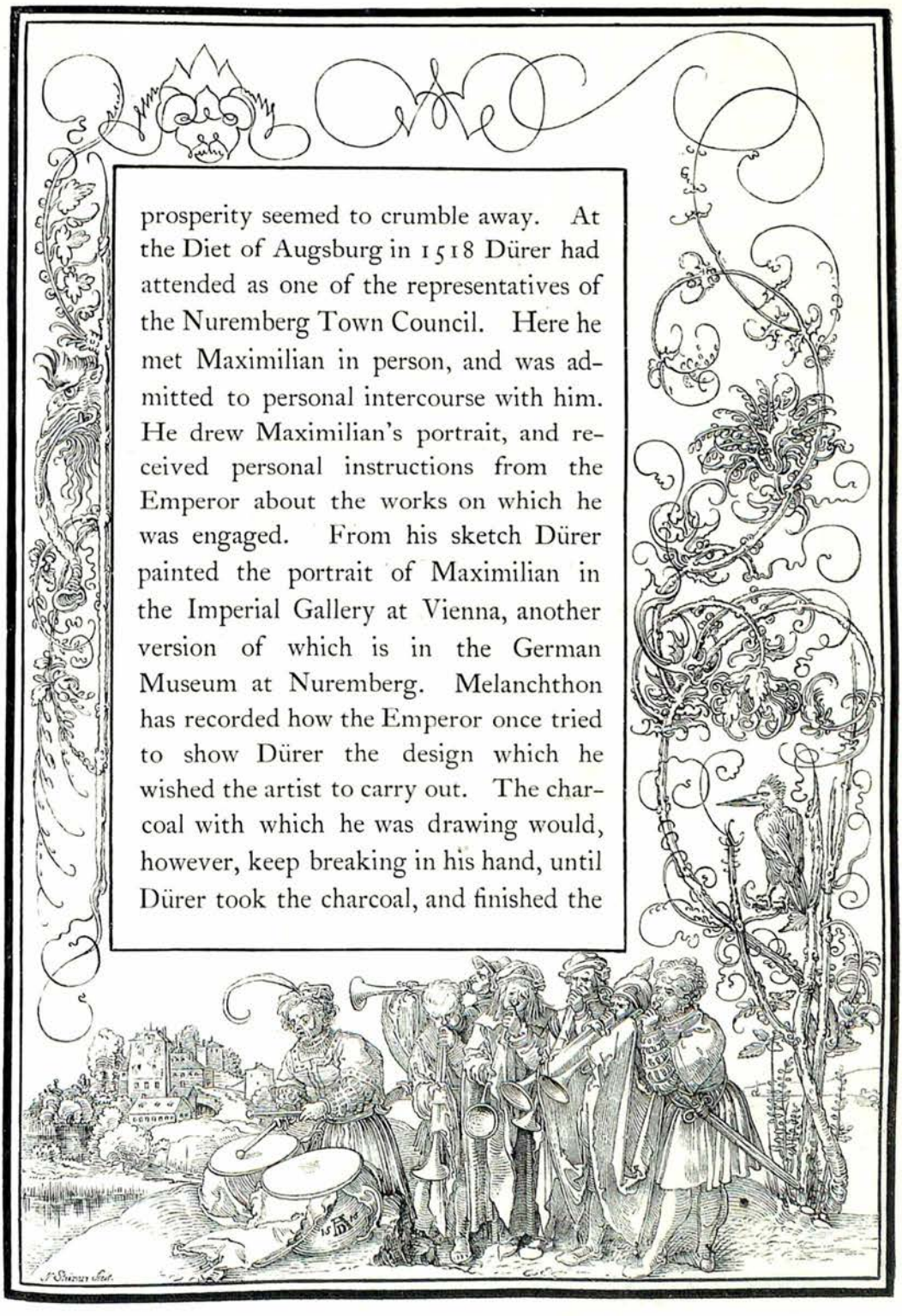
Design for Armour. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

most certainly possessed a keen enough power of observation to be able to discern in an artist the true bent of that artist's genius. Dürer's genius distinctly showed an inclination to ornament, as indicated by his love of fine clothes and his golden curls, and his countless sketches of what was gayest and most picturesque or curious in nature.

On the margins of Maximilian's *Book of Hours*, which is now in the Royal Library at Munich, Dürer has conceived a series, linked together by flowers and tendrils, of playful fancies, religious scenes or figures, fairy-tales, devilries, landscapes, animals, insects, all designed and drawn in with the care and skill of a mediæval illuminator. The difference between Dürer's marginal drawings and the mediæval miniaturists lies in Dürer's complete freedom from convention, the copiousness of his invention, and the originality and appropriateness of his designs. This method of illustrating books may have been originally due to Pirkheimer, for it is known that there were at least sixteen books in Pirkheimer's library which were so illustrated by Dürer. One of these, an Aldine edition of *Theocritus* illustrated by Dürer in 1524, was recently in the collection of the late Mr. Hartley. Maximilian may have been shown one of these volumes by Pirkheimer, who was in high favour at the imperial court, and so expressed his desire to have some volumes adorned in a similar way for his own imperial delectation. In all the drawings and engravings executed for Maximilian the Emperor took a keen and personal interest. The designs were all submitted to him, and in many cases he seems to have supplied the original ideas himself. These ideas he communicated to his agents in the matter, Pirkheimer and Melchior Pfinzing at Nuremberg, Stabius and Marx Treitzsauerwein at Augsburg, and they saw that the Emperor's meaning was interpreted by the best artists of the day. Most of the drawings, miniature paintings, woodblocks, etc., which were in progress at the time of Maximilian's sudden death are still preserved in the imperial collections at Vienna. They afford a most valuable opportunity of contrasting the work of contemporary artists,—Dürer and his school at Nuremberg with Hans Burgkmair and his school at Augsburg. Good as the designs of Burgkmair are, it is easy to discern the superiority of these, which are obviously from the hand or mind of Dürer.

With the death of Maximilian in 1519 all the foundations of Dürer's

prosperity seemed to crumble away. At the Diet of Augsburg in 1518 Dürer had attended as one of the representatives of the Nuremberg Town Council. Here he met Maximilian in person, and was admitted to personal intercourse with him. He drew Maximilian's portrait, and received personal instructions from the Emperor about the works on which he was engaged. From his sketch Dürer painted the portrait of Maximilian in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, another version of which is in the German Museum at Nuremberg. Melanchthon has recorded how the Emperor once tried to show Dürer the design which he wished the artist to carry out. The charcoal with which he was drawing would, however, keep breaking in his hand, until Dürer took the charcoal, and finished the



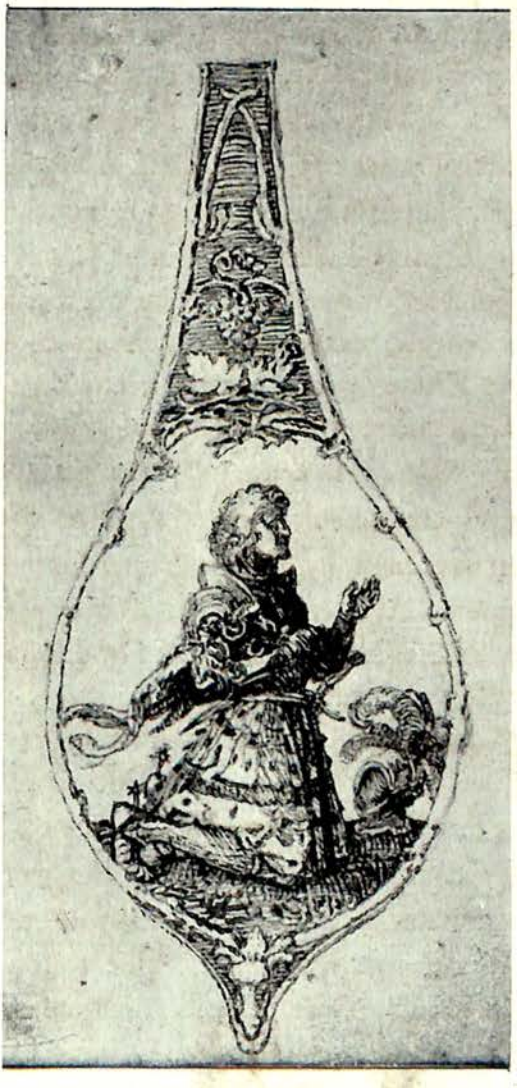
Page from the "Book of Hours," designed by A. Dürer for the Emperor Maximilian. From a Lithograph by J. N. Strixner.

drawing without breaking the charcoal. Maximilian asked how he managed to do this, to which Dürer replied that it was within his province to draw, but that the Emperor had other and more important tasks to perform. "Juxta illud proverbium," adds Melanchthon, "aliud est sceptrum, aliud plectrum." At Augsburg Dürer drew portraits of Albrecht of Brandenburg, the enlightened and cultivated Cardinal Archbishop of Mainz, from which drawing he afterwards made the two well-known engravings. There also he came into personal relations with another High Church dignitary, Matthäus Lang, Cardinal Archbishop of Salzburg, from whom he received commissions. Maximilian moreover on this occasion went near to repaying Dürer for his work by an order on the Town Council for a sum of 200 florins due to imperial chest for taxes. But everything was stopped by the sudden death of the Emperor, *quem Deus opt. max. in numerum viventium referre velit* as the inscription runs on Dürer's portrait of the Emperor at Vienna.

The Town Council of Nuremberg, already compelled by imperial command to pay Dürer a pension out of the taxes, and who had no doubt made wry faces over the order to pay a further sum of 200 florins from the same source, gladly availed themselves of the Emperor's death to cancel this order. Dürer in vain protested, offering to pledge his old house "Unter der Vesten" to the Council as a security. Not only did they refuse to pay the money in question, but there seems to have been some discussion as to whether they were liable to continue paying Dürer's annual pension of 100 florins without a renewal of the imperial deed of command. So Dürer made up his mind that there was nothing to be done but to leave Nuremberg and go to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the new Emperor was to be crowned, in the hope of being admitted to a personal interview with the Emperor, and of getting Maximilian's deed ratified by his successor. To this venture he was probably also impelled by his wife, Agnes, who, in despite of the difficulties of travelling in those days, determined to accompany him on his travels.

It was a venturesome journey for Dürer to take, for he had to lay aside his graving tools as well as his palette and easel for the time. Baggage in those days had to be reduced to its lowest possible scale on a journey, most of which had to be done by boat or on horseback. Packets of engravings and woodcuts, copies of his famous "books," great and small,

formed part of his equipment, together with sketch-books of a small size to be filled with minute drawings executed with the silver point, and of a larger size to admit of portrait-drawings freely drawn in charcoal. Dürer however left, this time, no mouths to fill at home. His beloved old

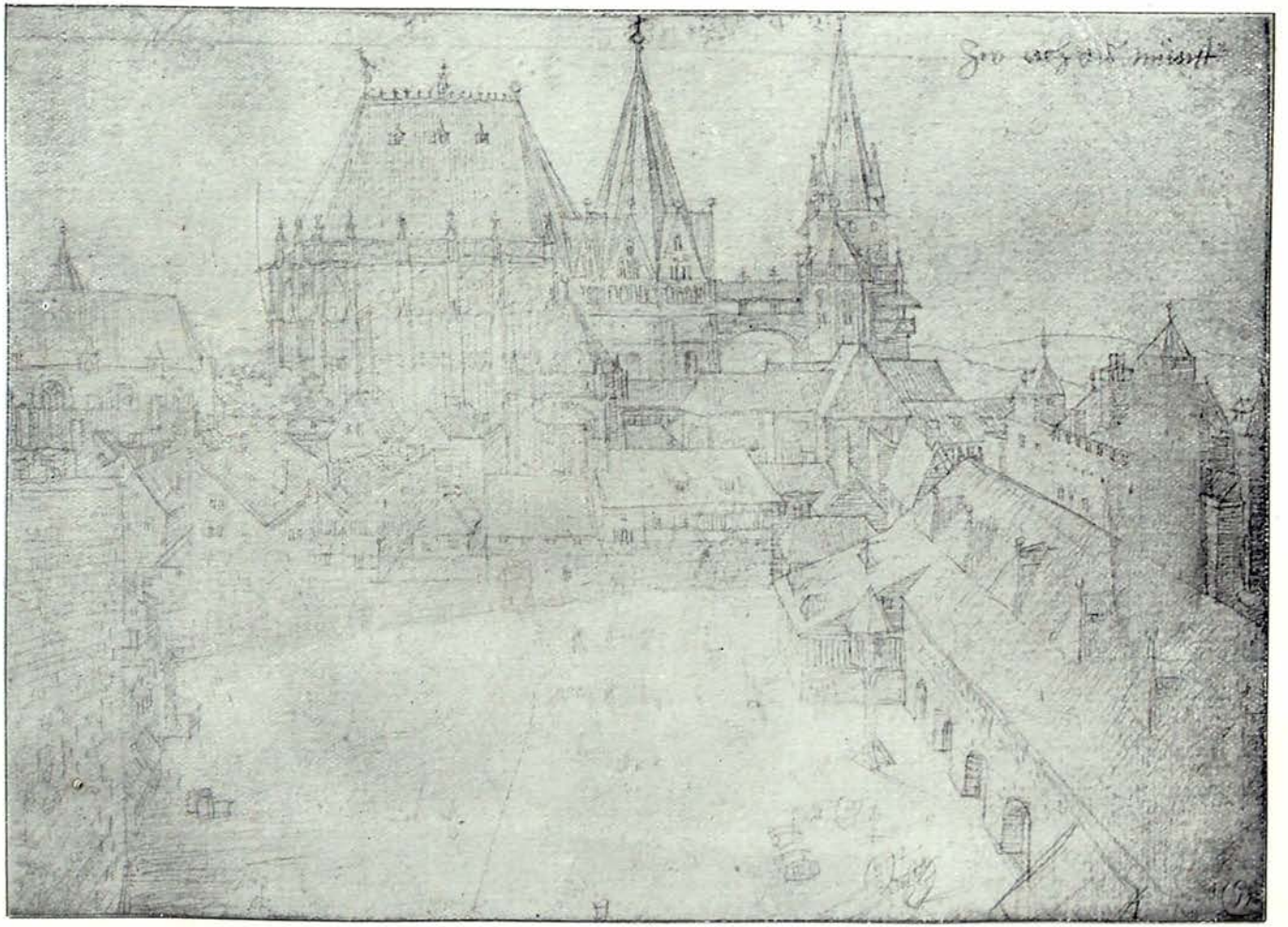


Design for a Spoon. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

mother had died on May 17, 1514. His young brother, Hans, was well started as a painter. Hieronymus Andreæ, the wood-engraver, was probably left to look after the sale of Dürer's engravings. Pirkheimer probably as before agreed to look after Dürer's finances during his absence.

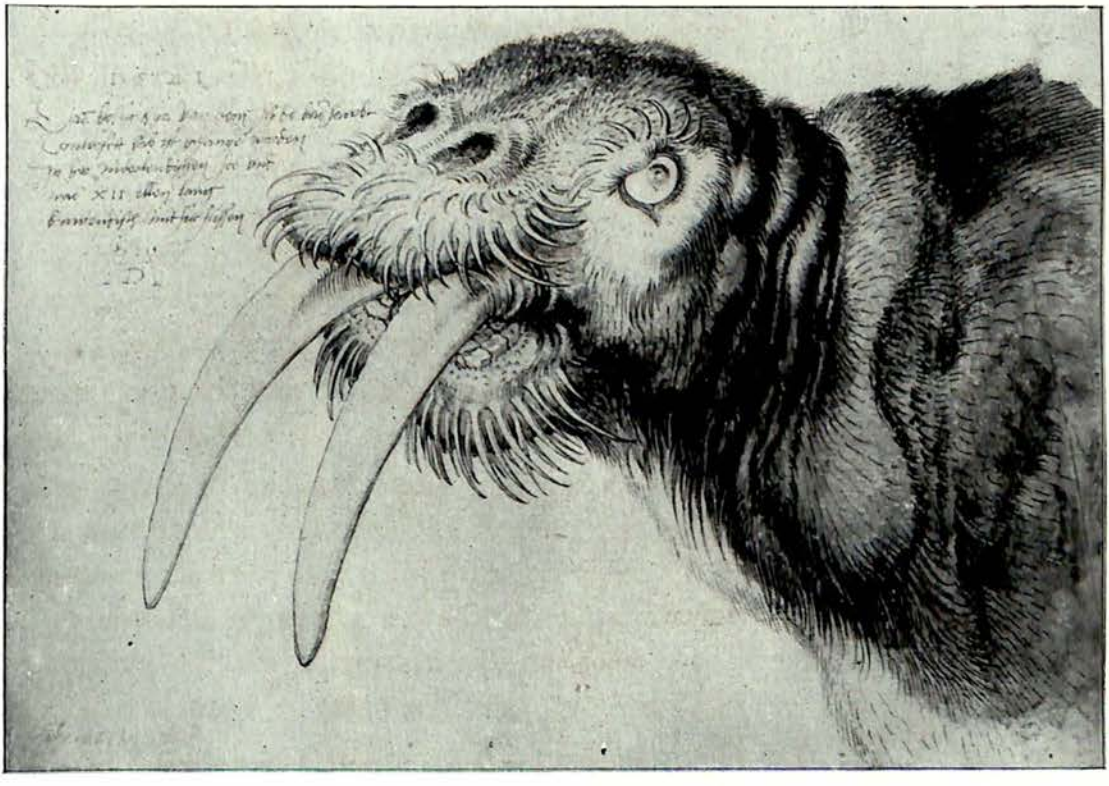
Dürer and his wife arrived at Antwerp in August 1520, and were

most warmly received by the artists in that town. Dürer's journal of his travels records that he did his best to pay his way by the sale of his engravings, and by executing immediate commissions for drawing portraits, coats-of-arms, etc. At Antwerp he notes that he drew portraits of Jobst Planckfeldt, his host; Felix Hungersperg, the lute-player; the Bombelli, a Genoese family settled in Antwerp; and Nikolas Kratzer of Munich, astronomer to King Henry VIII. of England, whose portrait has also been preserved to us by Hans Holbein. At Brussels, among others, he drew Meister Bernhard, painter to the Lady Margaret (better known as Bernhard van Orley), and Erasmus, as he says, "once more." Returning to Antwerp he drew, among others, the painter Jakob of Lübeck, and the brothers Von Roggendorf, for whom also he drew a large heraldic book-plate. In October of the same year Dürer made his way to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the Emperor was crowned, and succeeded in obtaining the chief object of his journey,—the renewal of the pension granted to him by Maximilian. There also he notes various portraits drawn "in charcoal" or "in my sketch-book," including that of Peter von Enden, his host. He then returned by Cologne and Emmerich, travelling by boat along the Rhine to Antwerp. From Antwerp in December Dürer made an expedition to Zierikzee on the coast of Holland, and he kept his pencil and paint well employed upon that journey. Though he failed in his object, which was to see a whale which had been stranded on the sea, he may have seen or copied the description of the walrus drawn by him and now in the British Museum. It is not impossible that this may have been the animal in question, for the word *walfisch* is used somewhat generally for such beasts, and there is nothing in the drawing to denote that it was drawn from life. The following six months he spent at Antwerp, where he was in great favour, and no doubt found that trade was good. So highly indeed was Dürer esteemed at Antwerp, that the Council offered him 300 Philipsgulden a year, a good house, and immunity from taxes, if he would only settle there. He notes in his journal the names of many persons whom he drew in "black chalk," "hard chalk," "in metal point," "black and white pencil," or "charcoal," and in consequence of his long stay he was able to complete some of these portraits in oils. Among the persons portrayed were "Master Jean, good marble sculptor," in black chalk, perhaps Jan D'Heere, the sculptor



View of Aix-la-Chapelle. From a Leaf of Dürer's Sketch-book in the British Museum.

of Ghent, and father of Lucas D'Heere, the portrait-painter; Cornelius Grapheus, in hard chalk; Bernhard of Brussels (Bernhard van Orley), painted in oils, which portrait is now in the Royal Picture Gallery at Dresden; Meister Joachim, "the good landscape painter," in metal point, *i.e.* Joachim Patinir, the painter, from which drawing a good engraving was made, erroneously attributed to Dürer himself; Thomas Bologna of Rome, in charcoal, *i.e.* Tommaso Vincidor of Bologna, a former pupil



A Walrus. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

of Raphael at Rome, who painted in turn a portrait of Dürer which has been engraved. At Bruges in April 1821 Dürer drew the portrait of Jan Prost (Prevost), a well-known painter there. At Ghent he was immensely impressed by Van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb.* Returning to Antwerp he notes drawing in May "an English nobleman's portrait" in charcoal, and in July Meister Lukas van Leyden in metal point. Dürer's meeting with his greatest contemporary rival in engraving is an interesting incident in the history of art. This "metal-point" portrait of Lukas is in the Musée Wicar at Lille; Dürer however drew another portrait of

him in charcoal, which has lately passed (1896) from the collection of the Earl of Warwick into that of Mr. Salting.

In July, "on our Lady's Visitation, as I was just about to leave Antwerp, the King of Denmark sent to me to come to him at once, and take his portrait, which I did in charcoal. I also did that of his servant Anton ; and I was made to dine with the King, and he behaved graciously to me." The next day Dürer and his wife travelled to Brussels in the suite of King Christian, in order to paint his portrait in oils. "I noticed," says Dürer, "how the people of Antwerp marvelled greatly when they saw the King of Denmark, to find him such a manly handsome man, and come hither through his enemy's land with only two attendants. I saw too, how the Emperor rode forth from Brussels to meet him, and received him honourably with great pomp. Then I saw the noble costly banquet, which the Emperor and Lady Margaret held next day in his honour. On the Sunday before Margaret's the King of Denmark gave a great banquet to the Emperor, Lady Margaret, and the Queen of Spain, and he bade me in and I dined there also. I paid 12 stivers for the King's frame, and I painted the King's portrait in oil, he having given me 30 florins. I gave 2 stivers to the lad, Bartholomaeus by name, who rubbed the colours for me." This portrait of King Christian of Denmark has disappeared ; but there is a metal-point drawing in the British Museum which seems to be a profile portrait of the king. From Brussels and his royal host Dürer started back on his homeward journey, reaching Nuremberg after a year's absence about midsummer in 1521. He had accomplished the chief object of his journey. The confirmation of his pension was in his wallet, but he was dissatisfied with the financial results of his journey ; and his health, never very strong, had been severely undermined by a fever, contracted during his journey to the malarious coast of Holland.

At Madrid there is a portrait painted by Dürer in 1521, and one of the finest of his works. It has been conjectured to be a portrait of Hans Imhoff the elder, the Nuremberg banker, and to have been executed by Dürer upon his return to Nuremberg, in repayment for money advanced by Imhoff. The portrait, however, is closely allied to the portraits drawn and painted by Dürer at Antwerp earlier in that year, such as that of Bernhard van Orley, and more probably it was one

of his Antwerp acquaintances. May it not be the "very fine and careful portrait in oils of the treasurer Lorenz Sterk," worth 25 florins, painted in May 1821, and presented to the treasurer in return for 20 florins and 1 florin *trinkgeld* to Susanna, his wife's maid?

Dürer returned to Nuremberg full of honour, but his health was broken, and his life-work nearly done. The Town Council, finding the walls of the great room in the Rathhaus in need of fresh decoration,

Sketch of a Dog. From a Leaf of A. Durer's Sketch-book in the British Museum.

invited Dürer to design decorative paintings for them. In former years this commission might have been accepted with enthusiasm; but now Dürer appears to have taken little interest in it, for he did not do more than supply the designs, leaving the actual painting to be carried out by Georg Pencz and other pupils. The time-worn subject of the *Calumny of Apelles* formed one design, and for another Dürer used his unfinished sketch of Maximilian's *Triumphal Car*, one of the commissions broken off by the Emperor's death, which he now completed, and also issued in woodcut form in 1522. But painting on a large

scale never suited Dürer's method. He became more and more of a home-worker, working at his books on Proportion, Painting, Fortification, etc., and preparing them for the press. Copperplate-engraving he almost entirely abandoned; but his drawings for wood-engraving, especially those of a heraldic or ornamental nature, became very numerous. He was perplexed by the religious troubles of the time, and the disturbances which took place in Nuremberg affected him very closely. His foreman and pupils were all imprisoned, and some expelled from the town. Such times were an ill soil for the flourishing of art. As Dürer became more of a philosopher he became less of a creative artist. The problems which he tried to solve were of an infinite nature, the veritable "Fata Morgana" of art. Truth and beauty, who shall define them! As the ideal seemed to him to become more intelligible, Dürer became dissatisfied with his own works. Melanchthon, who was much at Nuremberg about this time with Pirkheimer, and who knew and loved Dürer, says that "Dürer, the painter, a man of remarkable talent and virtue, was wont to say that, when young, he liked bright and florid pictures, and could not help delighting to see the brilliance and variety of the colouring. But later when he came to look upon Nature as an old man and endeavoured to get a closer view of her native face, he began to understand that the greatest glory of art lay in her simplicity. And as he could not wholly attain to this, he said that he had ceased to admire his own works, as he had once done, but that now he groaned when he looked on his paintings and thought of his own deficiencies."

Truly the shades of evening were closing over Dürer's life, and threw a sombre tone over it. His letters at this period show a rather despondent and discontented state of mind. Money matters were an anxiety to him, both in the present and for the future. The following letter to the Town Council is a severe indictment of their behaviour towards him :—

PRUDENT, HONOURABLE, AND WISE, MOST GRACIOUS MASTERS—During long years, by hard-working pains and labour, with the help of God's blessing, I have saved out of my earnings as much as 1000 guldens Rhenish, which I should now be glad to invest for my support.

I know, indeed, that your Honours are not often wont at the present time to grant interest at the rate of one gulden for twenty; and I have been told that before

Portrait of Imhoff (?). Madrid Gallery. From a Photograph by J. A. Stein.

now other applications of a like kind have been refused. It is not, therefore, without scruple that I address your Honours in this matter. Yet my necessities impel me to prefer this request to your Honours, and I am encouraged to do so above all by the particularly gracious favour which I have always received from your Honourable Wisdoms (*Weisheit*), as well as by the following considerations.

Your Wisdoms know I have always hitherto shown myself dutiful, willing, and zealous in all matters that concerned your Wisdoms and the common weal of the town. You know, moreover, how before now I have served many individual members of the Council as well as of the community here, gratuitously rather than for pay, when they stood in need of my help, art, and labour. I can also write with truth that, during the thirty years I have stayed at home, I have not received from people in this town work worth 500 gulden—truly a trifling and ridiculous sum—and not a fifth part of that has been profit. I have on the contrary earned and attained all my poor means (which, God knows, has grown irksome to me) from princes, lords, and other foreign persons; moreover I do nothing but spend in this town what I have earned from foreigners.

Doubtless also your Honours remember that at one time the Emperor Maximilian of most praiseworthy memory, in return for the manifold services which I had performed for him year after year, of his own impulse and imperial charity, wanted to make me free of taxes in this town. At the instance however of my Lords, the Elders, who treated with me in the matter in the name of the Council, I willingly resigned that privilege to the said my Lords in order to honour and to maintain their privileges, usages and rights.

Again nineteen years ago the Signoria of Venice offered to appoint me to an office and to give me a salary of 200 ducats a year. So too only a short time ago, when I was in the Netherlands, the Council of Antwerp would have given me 300 Philipsgulden a year, kept me there free of taxes, and honoured me with a well-built house; and besides I should have been paid in addition at both places for all the work I might have done for the gentry. But I declined all this because of the particular love and affection which I bear to your honourable Wisdoms and to my fatherland, this honourable town, preferring, as I did, to live under your Wisdoms in a moderate way rather than to be rich and held in honour in other places.

It is therefore my most submissive prayer to your Honours that you will be pleased graciously to take these facts into consideration, and to receive from me on my account these 1000 guldens, paying me fifty guldens a year as interest. I could indeed place them with other respectable parties here and elsewhere, but I should prefer to see them in the hands of your Wisdoms. I and my wife will then, now that we are both growing daily older, feebler and more helpless, possess the certainty of a fitting household for our needs; and we shall experience thereby, as formerly, your honourable Wisdoms' favour and good-will. To merit this from your Honours with all my powers I shall ever be found willing.—Your Wisdoms' willing and obedient burgher,

ALBRECHT DÜRER.

Portrait-painting was almost the only form of painting which Dürer had practised. One of the most elaborate and interesting of his drawings is the portrait of Henry Parker, Lord Morley, who in 1523 visited Nuremberg on an embassy from Henry VIII. to the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria; this portrait, which is more Holbeinesque in character than his other drawn portraits, is now in the British Museum. The portraits executed about this period are wrought with a careful intensity which is almost painful. One of the most important is that of Hieronymus Holzschuher, sold a few years ago by the family to the Berlin Picture Gallery. In this every detail, every hair, every stroke of the brush is so minute that the result is far from being attractive. The painter seems to be trying to make a realistic painting interpret an idea and not a merely living fact. Another portrait of this date is that of Johann Kleeberger, which passed from Pirkheimer's collection through the Imhoffs to Rudolph II., and is now at Vienna. Another is that of Jacob Muffel, now also at Berlin.

One great imaginative creation however was still to be carried out. For years Dürer's mind had been pondering over his ideas of human perfection in mind and body. Through this channel, he thought, the Divine can only be taught and known. The four Temperaments presented themselves to his mind as cardinal motives for the conveyance of this truth. He had already tried to express this in his famous engravings; and he now prepared to deliver the same sermon, as his valedictory message in painting. So in 1526 he finished two great upright panels with figures of St. Peter and St. John on one, St. Paul and St. Mark on the other, as apostolic preachers to his fellow-citizens. To each figure are attached words from Luther's translation of the Bible, written by the apostles themselves, words of warning and rebuke to all men and all time. This was Dürer's final gift and message to his people, which he offered to the Town Council with the following letter :—

PRUDENT, HONOURABLE, WISE, DEAR MASTERS—I have been intending for a long time past to show my respect for your Wisdoms by the presentation of some humble picture of mine as a remembrance, but I have been prevented from so doing by the imperfection and insignificance of my works, for I felt that with such I could not well stand before your Wisdoms. Now however that I have just lately painted a panel upon which I have bestowed more trouble than on any other paintings, I considered none more worthy to keep it as a reminiscence than your Wisdoms.

Henry Parker, Lord Morley. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

Therefore I present it to your Wisdoms with the humble and urgent prayer that you will favourably and graciously receive it, and will be and continue, as I have ever found you, my kind and dear Masters. Thus shall I be diligent to serve your Wisdoms in all humility.—Your Wisdoms' humble ALBRECHT DÜRER.

These paintings were Dürer's last important work. They were finished in 1526; and on April 6, 1528, the great artist was dead. His soul had fled upon

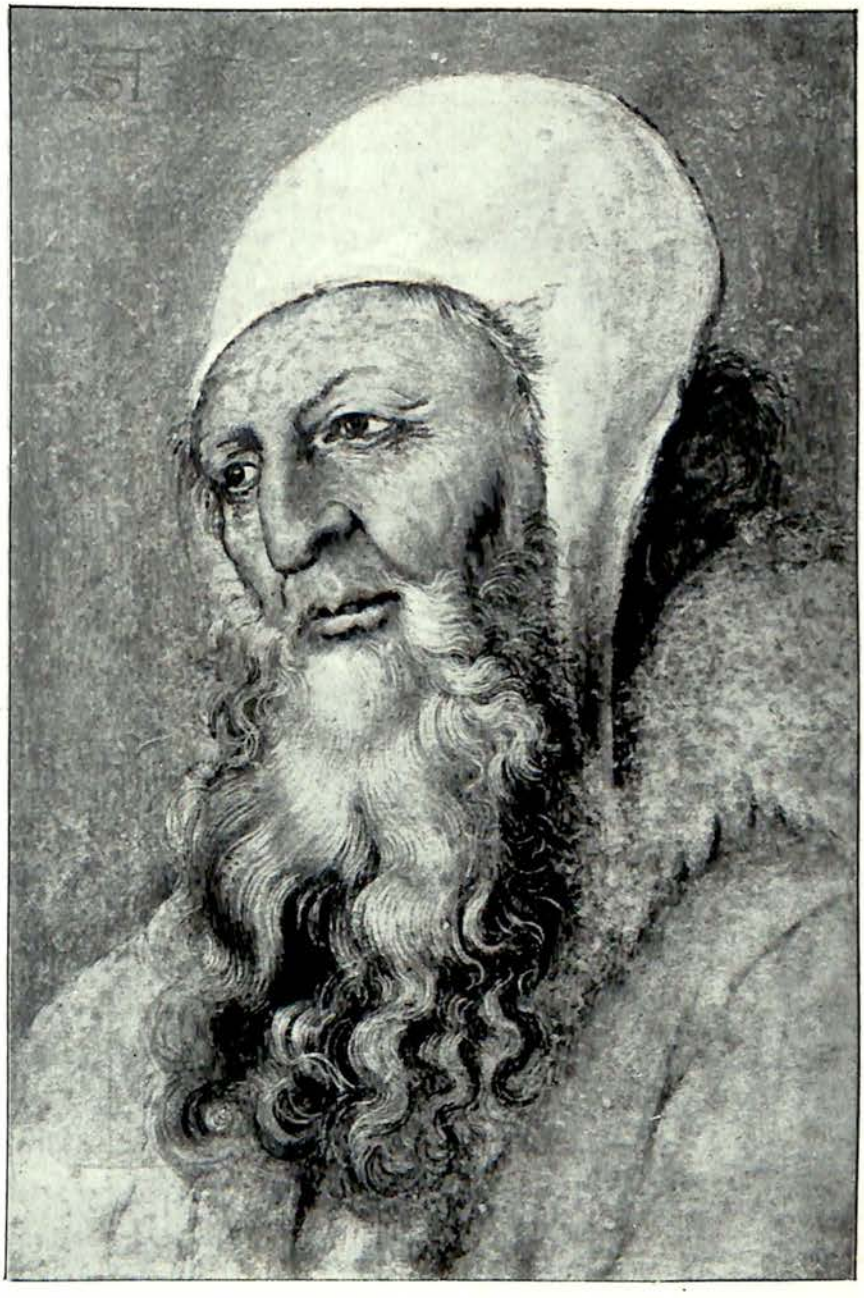
her immortal way
Home to the original source of Light and intellectual day.
CRASHAW.

In his own opinion his work was incomplete, his goal unattained. Posterity has formed a different opinion. Had Dürer lived longer, he might have said, in the words of a later writer, of his search for Truth—

I have sought, for long years I have laboured, but I have not found her. I have not rested, I have not repined, and I have not seen her; now my strength is gone. Where I lie down worn out, other men will stand, young and fresh. By the steps that I have cut they will climb; by the stairs that I have built they will mount. They will mount and on *my* work; they will climb, and by *my* stair! They will find her and through me! And no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. (O. Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm.*)

It is difficult to speak with certainty about the works of Dürer during the last few years of life. Illness and anxiety certainly dulled and blunted the skill of his hand and the acuteness of his intellect. It seems certain that he left a large number of drawings which were transferred on to wood, and published under the superintendence of his widow, and of Hieronymus Andreæ, his wood-engraver. Many woodcuts of this date, which are assigned to Dürer, may, even when unworthy of him, be based on some of his designs. A certain number of paintings also remain which may have been designed by him and carried out by his assistants, such as the *Procession to Calvary*, a study in *grisaille*, versions of which, signed and dated 1527, are in the Dresden Gallery, the collection of Sir Francis Cook at Richmond, and elsewhere. A *Madonna and Child with a Pear* in the Uffizii at Florence is probably the work of Dürer's own hand, being signed and dated 1526; in this painting Dürer shows, in addition to his adherence to his canons of proportion, an inclination to revert from his usual realistic type of female beauty to the more conventional Virgins of the Flemish and Schongauer schools.

Many paintings exist which bear the name of Dürer, and not unfrequently his well-known signature, but which reveal no traces of his



Head of Old Man. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

master-hand. Many are but renderings of his better-known engravings in colours, some mere *pasticci* on his drawings. An exhaustive inspection of the collection of pictures in the royal, princely, and noble houses in

Germany and Austria might lead to the disinterment of a few more Madonnas, portraits, or other paintings of minor importance, his "ordinary paintings" as he would have called them himself. To the number of "Great Pictures" it is unlikely that any addition will be made.

Dürer stands, as it were, on the watershed between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, both in the progress of art and in the development of human intellect. Intensely conservative by nature, he yet opened out new roads and paths in art, along which his successors have journeyed and are still journeying in the search for that ideal of Truth and Beauty which Dürer felt that he himself should never reach. He writes himself that

> Much will hereafter be written about subjects and refinements of painting. Sure am I that notable men will arise, all of whom will write both well and better about this art and will teach it better than I. For I myself hold my art at a very mean value; for I know what my faults are. Let every man, therefore, strive to better these my errors according to his powers. Would to God it were possible for me to see the work and art of the mighty masters to come, who are yet unborn, for I know that I might be improved.

Again he writes:—

> God sometimes granteth unto a man to learn and know how to make a thing, the like whereof in his day no other can contrive; and perhaps for a long time none hath been before him, and after him another cometh not soon.

Truly may it be said in the history of German art that "after him another cometh not soon"; for Dürer remains the typical German artist even at the close of the nineteenth century.

Rubens, who represents the opposite pole of art to Dürer, said of himself, "Je confesse d'estre par un instinct naturel plus propre à faire des ouvrages bien grandes que des petits curiositez." Dürer might have said the exact reverse about himself. Trained originally as a goldsmith, then as an engraver, his work is full of "petits curiositez," and his great pictures are sometimes built up of these with some detriment to the harmony of the whole composition. His decorative instinct caused him to shun open spaces in his paintings and engravings, and these he filled with his *Traumwerk* or other fanciful additions. It is chiefly in his drawings that the wonderful freedom of his hand can be seen. On whatever material or with whatever instrument they are executed they show

largeness and copiousness of imagination. Sometimes they are in themselves carefully-finished pictures, which, if magnified to any extent, would

Portrait of a Young Man. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

have little to gain or lose by the process, so complete are they in themselves. Such are the series known as the *Green Passion* at Vienna, drawn

in 1504. The slightest sketches or studies with the pen or silver point are full of individual character; and the bold rapid portrait studies in black chalk or charcoal were the forerunners of a whole school of similar drawings. The greater part of his drawings, which were made for his own use, appear to have passed into the possession of his life-long friend, Pirkheimer, perhaps handed over by Dürer's widow to redeem the many financial obligations under which Dürer lay to his friend. The sketch-books used by Dürer in the Netherlands seem to have passed into the possession of the Pfinzing family, and were dispersed by their next owner. At Pirkheimer's death the whole of his collections, including the paintings and drawings by Dürer, became the property of the Imhoff family, the bankers and usurers of Nuremberg. The Imhoffs, as befits a good steady money-making firm, seem to have regarded Dürer's works as a marketable commodity. At the end of the sixteenth century, when the Emperor Rudolph II. was forming his great collection of works of art and curiosities, the Imhoffs, knowing his intense admiration for the works of Dürer, pressed upon him the collection of paintings and drawings which they possessed. The Town Council of Nuremberg seem to have followed suit with the paintings which were immediately under their control, if not actually in their possession. In a short time Rudolph became possessed of the bulk of Dürer's paintings and drawings at Prague or Vienna. Several of the paintings remain in the imperial collection to this day; and a large portion of the drawings now forms the nucleus of what is known as the "Albertina" collection at Vienna. Another portion of the Imhoff collection found its way through a collector in the Netherlands, perhaps through one of the Austrian governors, into that of Sir Hans Sloane, and is now in the print-room at the British Museum. These two collections, together with the great collection, which official industry and acumen have brought together at Berlin, are the best field for the study of Dürer's work as a draughtsman, although in some of the smaller public or private collections some of the most remarkable examples are to be found.

The good citizens of Nuremberg continued their work of converting Dürer's works into hard cash whenever the opportunity occurred. In 1585 the Town Council persuaded or compelled the governors of the Landauer almshouses to sell to the Emperor Rudolph their great painting

of *All Saints*, replacing it by a copy which, by way of carrying out the deception, was inserted in the original frame designed by Dürer. The *Adam* and *Eve* also appear to have passed into the same imperial hands. In 1627 the Council sold to the Elector Maximilian of Bavaria the two great panels of the *Four Preachers*, Dürer's last gift to

Sketch for a Book-Plate. From a Drawing in the British Museum.

his native town, and replaced them by copies. The long inscriptions from the Bible were cut off from the original panels, and added on below the copies. A few years before, in 1613, they had presented the same Elector with the beautiful Baumgärtner altar-piece, which was torn from its place in St. Catherine's Church at Nuremberg. The two *Descents from the Cross*

followed in the same channel; and the Praun collection at Nuremberg yielded up the portrait of Wolgemut and the portrait of Hans Dürer. Worst of all, the portrait of their beloved and honoured citizen, the world-famous portrait of Dürer by himself, which had become actually the property of the Town Council, was lent by them to a local painter to copy; this ingenious craftsman sawed the panel in half, and glued his copy on to the back, on which were the town seal and other marks of ownership, and sold the original to King Ludwig I. of Bavaria. The worthy magistrates never discovered the fraud, or pretended not to, and this copy hangs to-day at Nuremberg, a monument of dishonour and fraud. Gradually Nuremberg divested itself of every work by Dürer which it could, and rejoiced in its copies and its cash. Ludwig I. of Bavaria took pity on its denuded condition and gave back to it as a gift the *Descent from the Cross*, known as the Peller altar-piece, and also apparently returned from Schleissheim the *Hercules and the Stymphalian Birds*. With the over-daubed paintings of Charlemagne and Sigismund, these appear to be the only authenticated paintings by Dürer in his native town at the present day. Three hundred years after Dürer's death a statue was erected to him in Nuremberg, and his house is now preserved and shown as a national relic. Yet little more than fifty years after the erection of this statue, in 1884, the citizens allowed the famous "Holzschuher" portrait, the last great work by Dürer which the town possessed, to be sold by the family, to whom it still belonged, to the picture gallery at Berlin. Truly a prophet hath little honour in his own country!

In estimating Dürer's work as a painter it is necessary to distinguish between the paintings executed in his workshop and those done entirely with his own hand. In the early part of his career Dürer seems to have employed as assistants Hans Leonhard Schäuflein, who worked entirely under Dürer's influence; Hans Baldung, nicknamed Grün, a Swabian artist, with much originality, although greatly influenced by Dürer, to whom he was bound by ties of great friendship; Albrecht Altdorfer of Ratisbon, and Hans Süss of Kulmbach. These artists were all but a few years junior to Dürer. Later in life Dürer employed more actually as pupils the two Behams, Barthel and Hans Sebald, and Georg Pencz of Nuremberg, and Heinrich Aldegrever of Paderborn.

These artists were pupils of Dürer in engraving as well as drawing and painting, and formed the group which is known as the "Little Masters." They carried on the tradition of Dürer for many years. As its influence became less, German art lost all life and originality, and ceased to exercise any office except that of the most menial character.

Dürer's drawings remained, for many years after his death, subjects for the closest imitation by his immediate pupils and later German artists. Even in the great Imhoff collection there were numerous works attributed to Dürer which must be regarded as spurious. Some artists, like Hans Hofmann, were so skilful in imitating Dürer's most minute and elaborate drawings, especially his coloured drawings of natural objects, that only a skilled eye can distinguish with certainty between the copy and the original. In the school of Dürer also many drawings were made which, although thoroughly Düreresque in character, must be set down as mere *pasticci* and imitations. The student's task therefore is not an easy one; but Dürer's personality in all his work is so strong that the eye quickly learns to reject anything which does not appeal to it at once as the master's work.

Dürer handled every possible sort of method in his drawings, from the boldest charcoal outline to the most delicate silver point, from the finest pen-work to the freest possible sketch. Working as an artist in black and white, he at the same time shows his delight in bright and vivid colours. As is shown from the story told above of Giovanni Bellini, his *stroke* was famous and regarded with amazement. Many artists have tried to rival Dürer in his delineation of hair, but few with success. Among the best may be reckoned our own living artist, Frederick Sandys.

It is natural to compare Albrecht Dürer as an artist with his two most noted contemporaries in German art, Hans Holbein and Lucas Cranach. In good truth, if he must be compared with any artist, it should be with that little-understood and much-underrated artist, Hans Holbein, the elder. The younger Holbein belonged to a later generation; he was entirely the child of the Reformation, the friend of the humanists, standing on this side of that great cleavage in the history of Europe, which Dürer never surmounted. Lucas Cranach too, while preserving more of the *sauvagerie* of mediæval art, became almost wholly wedded to the cause of Luther. As a portrait-painter, Cranach

has some affinity to Dürer, but is entirely lacking in the strong individuality which led Dürer to impose something of his own personality upon every one of his sitters, somewhat like Burne-Jones at the present day. Holbein gives a more direct human likeness to his portraits. He shows us his sitters as we should have seen them ourselves; not as Dürer did, who reflects them to us from the mirror of his own mind. Holbein seldom fails to appeal to the general spectator. Of Dürer it might be said, as a modern writer has said of Ford Madox Brown, "he must either repel strongly or appeal strongly."

Dürer may, without exaggeration, be said to be one of the greatest artists that the world has ever produced. He even succeeded where he failed; for, in the search for Truth and Beauty, to fail where Dürer failed argues a high pitch of excellence on the part of an artist. Even at the remote interval of more than three and a half centuries, the lament of his faithful friend, of his Pirkheimer, strikes an echo in many hearts. Writing to their common friend, Ulrich Varnbuler, the subject of one of Dürer's best-known portrait drawings, the sorrowing Pirkheimer says:—

Obiit Albertus noster, Udalrice optime! proh fatorum ordo memorabilis, proh misera conditio humana, proh dura inclementia mortis! Vir talis tantusque nobis ereptus est, quum interim tot inutiles ac nullius frugis homines fortuna perpetua vitaque fruantur plus quam diuturna.

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